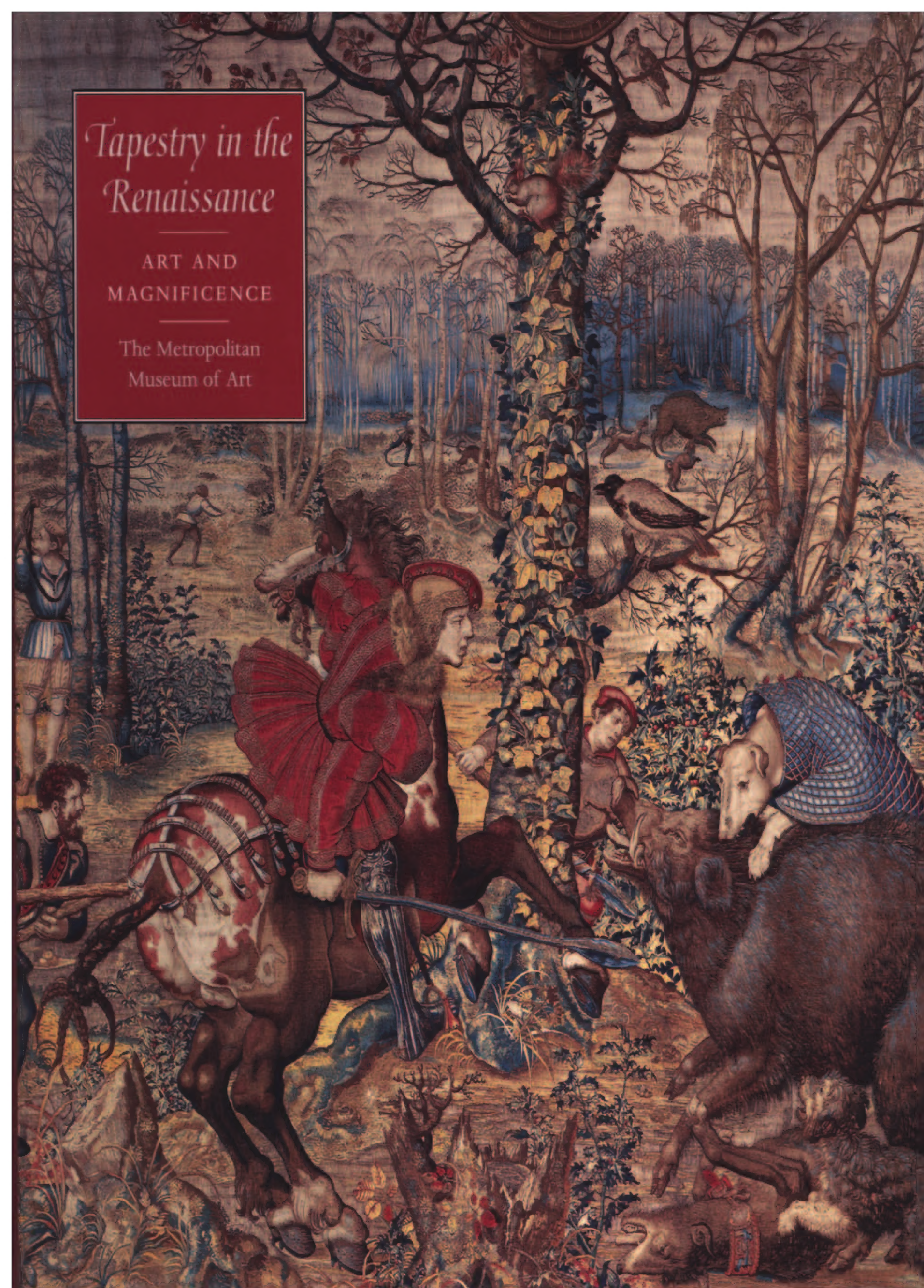


# *Tapestry in the Renaissance*

ART AND  
MAGNIFICENCE

The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art





# *Tapestry in the Renaissance*







# *Tapestry in the Renaissance Art and Magnificence*

Thomas P. Campbell

*with contributions by Maryan W. Ainsworth, Rotraud Bauer,  
Pascal-François Bertrand, Iain Buchanan, Elizabeth Cleland, Guy Delmarcel,  
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*Photography by Bruce White*

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## Director's Foreword

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, tapestries were a principal component of the ostentatious "magnificence" whose display was de rigueur for a religious or secular person of any power or stature. Yet where medieval tapestries have enjoyed considerable esteem in the public consciousness, those of the Renaissance have received much less attention from both the general public and art historians. "Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence" fills this gap by presenting the first extensive survey of tapestry production between 1460 and 1560 and, indeed, the first monographic loan exhibition of tapestries in the United States in twenty-five years. Many of the most important tapestry cycles of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are represented in this exhibition by more than forty examples drawn from collections in Europe and the United States, resulting in what is probably the greatest massing of Renaissance tapestries since the famous summit meetings that took place in western Europe during the 1520s, 1530s, and 1540s. It was tapestries like these, in some cases these very tapestries, that formed the backdrop to historic events such as the meeting between Francis I and Henry VIII at Guînes in 1520 (the meeting of the Field of Cloth of Gold); the coronation of Charles V by Pope Clement VII in Bologna in 1530; the meeting between Francis I and Charles V at Fontainebleau in 1539; and the reception held for Charles V and his son, Philip (later Philip II), by Mary of Hungary at the castle of Binche in 1549. Designed by the finest artists, woven in lavish silk and gold by outstanding craftsmen, and acquired by the wealthiest, most refined connoisseurs and patrons, these magnificent works represent the pinnacle of aesthetic and technical achievement of this remarkable epoch. The tapestries still dazzle today as they did five hundred years ago in the cathedrals, throne rooms, council chambers, and palaces of Europe. Almost every tapestry in the exhibition comes from a crown or papal collection. Thus, quite apart from their artistic and material interest, the themes and iconography they embody provide an extraordinary insight into the ambitions and interests of the rulers whose actions played such an important part in the development of modern Europe.

This exhibition is the result of four years of international negotiation and cooperation. In this context it is appropriate for me to express our special gratitude to Professor Giuliano Urbani, the culture minister of Italy, and to the Duke of San Carlos, president of the Spanish Patrimonio Nacional, for the generous manner in which they have dealt with our requests for an exceptionally large number of important loans. I extend my deepest thanks to the owners and the

directors and staffs of the following institutions and collections that have lent important works to this exhibition: the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels; the Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees; The Art Institute of Chicago; the Galleria degli Uffizi and the Palazzo Pitti, Florence; the Teyler Museum, Haarlem; the Wawel Royal Castle, Kraków; the Prentenkabinet Universiteit Leiden; the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon; the Royal Collection and the Historic Royal Palaces Agency (Hampton Court and Windsor); the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid; the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano; the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua; the Castello Sforzesco, Milan; the Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples; the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; the Musée Jacquemart-André and the Musée du Louvre, Paris; the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; the Musées de Sens; the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart; the Vatican Museums, Vatican City; the Basilicas of Santa Maria della Salute and San Marco, Venice; the Graphische Sammlung Albertina and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; the National Gallery of Art, Washington; and Zamora Cathedral.

The exhibition and this accompanying publication were conceived by Thomas Campbell, associate curator in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts and the supervising curator of the Antonio Ratti Textile Center. The book not only documents the exhibition but also provides a significant contribution to a field in which there has been a remarkable paucity of survey publications. The value of the catalogue is greatly enhanced by the superb new color photography by Bruce White, which records the tapestries in all their sumptuousness.

Our sincere gratitude is extended to the William Randolph Hearst Foundation for its contribution toward the exhibition. We would also like to acknowledge the kind assistance provided by the Garen Family Foundation for the exhibition and this publication. The support given by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities is profoundly appreciated by the Metropolitan Museum. It was through the generosity of the Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation Inc. and the Doris Duke Fund for Publications that this exhibition catalogue was made possible. An additional grant from Furthermore, a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, also assisted in the publication of this catalogue.

Philippe de Montebello  
Director  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

# Acknowledgments

My enthusiasm for a show on tapestry in the Renaissance crystallized while I was the archivist of the Franses Tapestry Archive in London (1987–94). Many of the ideas embodied in the exhibition were developed during this formative experience and in conversation with Simon Franses. With my move to the Metropolitan Museum in 1995, I was privileged to join one of the few institutions in the world that has the resources to mount such an exhibition. General discussions about the subject with my dear friend and mentor the late Edith Standen were sharpened in a memorable encounter with the Renaissance art historians John Shearman and Arnold Nesselrath. Their interest in the project gave me the incentive to organize my ideas into a more focused plan. With the encouragement of Olga Raggio, then Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Chairman of the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan, a proposal was submitted to Philippe de Montebello, director, and Mahrugh Tarapor, associate director for exhibitions, at the end of 1996. The form in which this exhibition will open to the public in March 2002 owes an enormous debt to Philippe and Mahrugh's personal support and guidance in its development. I am also grateful to Ian Wardropper, Olga's successor, for his support since his arrival at the Metropolitan in September 2001.

The first informal loan inquiries were mailed out in January 1998, and I am especially indebted to a group of colleagues and friends whose early enthusiasm for the project provided international momentum for the exhibition, particularly Maryan W. Ainsworth, Rotraud Bauer, Giorgio Bonsanti, Keith Christiansen, Guy Delmarcel, Nello Forti Grazzini, Maria Hennel-Bernasikowa, and Concha Herrero Carretero. Guy and Nello both reviewed my early plans for the show and made important suggestions. The subsequent task of formalizing the loan arrangements for so many precious and unique objects, the majority of great fragility and enormous size, has been a long and complex process. I owe especial gratitude to the following people, listed in order of the institutions with which their assistance was related: Pasquale Magro (Assisi, Basilica); Ronald de Leeuw and Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum); Elizabeth Anne Coleman (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts); Ingrid De Meûter and Alexandra de Poorter (Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire); Baudouin du Parc (Brussels); Zsuzsanna Vámos-Lovay, Emese Pástor, and Károly Simon (Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest); Peter Day (Chatsworth); Christa C. Mayer Thurman and Lorna Filippini (Chicago, Art Institute); Louise W. Mackie (Cleveland Museum of Art); Cristina Acidini Luchinat, Caterina Caneva, Giovanna Damiani, Loretta Dolcini, Clarice Innocenti, Antonio Paolucci, and Carlo Sisi (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi and Palazzo Pitti); Carel van Tuyl van Serooskerken (Haarlem, Teyler Museum); Jef Schaeys (Leiden, Prentenkabinet Universiteit); Jerzy T. Petrus, Maria Hennel-

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The planning and installation of the exhibition have taken place under the operational control of Linda M. Sylling, and I am greatly indebted to her experience and guidance. The days in which tapestries could be rolled up and transported by cart from one location to another are long since gone, and Aileen K. Chuk and the staff of the Registrar's Office have adroitly negotiated the complexities of international insurance, shipping companies, and customs. The design of the show has undergone a number of dramatic metamorphoses since my first, somewhat unrealistic plans: Daniel Bradley Kershaw, the designer of the exhibition, has responded to these changes with deftness and wit. Sophia Geronimus has provided the excellent graphics of the exhibition, and Pamela Barr edited the labels. Installation of such a show is extremely challenging, and here I am deeply grateful to Nobuko Kajitani and the staff of the Department of Textile Conservation, and Taylor Miller and the Museum workshops for accomplishing this task so smoothly. Physical installation of the objects has been undertaken jointly by Eric Peluso and William Kopp of the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts and by the Rigging Shop under the direction of Franz J. Schmidt and William Brautigam.

Throughout the genesis of the exhibition, Melinda Watt has been my reliable assistant and aide. Many other Museum colleagues have been involved in one way or another in the preparation of the exhibition and its related features: Harold Holzer, Elyse Topalian, and Andrew Ferren of the Communications Department; Jeffrey L. Daly and Zack Zanolli of the Design Department; Kerstin Larsen and Christine Scornavacca of the Development Office; Kent Lydecker, Stella Paul, Rebecca Arkenberg, Elizabeth Hammer-Munemura, and Christopher Noey of the Education Department; Martha Deese and Sian Wetherill in the office of the associate director for exhibitions; Barbara Bridgers of the Photograph Studio; and Carol E. Lekarew of the Photograph and Slide Library. My thanks are due to all for their time and dedication to this project.

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these I must thank John P. O'Neill, editor in chief, for recognizing the need for a substantial publication on the subject and committing the necessary resources to the realization of such a large and beautiful book. Tapestries are difficult to photograph well, and it was John who took the initiative to engage Bruce White, whose exquisite photographs greatly enhance the catalogue's value as a long-term record. The stylish design was provided by Bruce Campbell, and the production has been accomplished with skill and expertise by Peter Antony, Megan Arney, Robert Weisberg, and Minjee Cho.

The catalogue was originally planned as a single-author work, but with uncertainty regarding the final content of the exhibition extending as late as spring 2001, a number of colleagues were invited to write entries to complete the catalogue in a timely fashion. Words are insufficient to express my gratitude to Maryan Ainsworth (cat. nos. 30–34), Rotraud Bauer (cat. no. 54), Pascal-François Bertrand (cat. no. 56), Iain Buchanan (cat. nos. 35–36, 51), Elizabeth Cleland (cat. no. 6), Guy Delmarcel (cat. nos. 37–40), Nello Forti Grazzini (cat. nos. 10, 57–59), Maria Hennel-Bernasikowa (cat. nos. 42, 53), Lucia Meoni (cat. nos. 60–63), Cecilia Paredes (cat. no. 49), Hillie Smit (cat. no. 13), and Andrea Stockhammer (cat. no. 55), whose contributions have ensured that this exhibition received the publication it deserved.

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# *Tapestry in the Renaissance*







# The Art and Magnificence of Renaissance Tapestries: Introduction

In the months following the death of Henry VIII, king of England, in January 1547, the officers responsible for the furnishings of the royal palaces traveled around his various residences, laboriously compiling an updated inventory of the royal possessions. The result provides an informative glimpse of the material wealth and preoccupations of this notorious prince of the Renaissance, including everything from his most precious possessions and jewels to the chamber pots and closestools in his apartments.<sup>1</sup> One of the most remarkable things the inventory reveals is the extent to which the royal palaces were decorated from top to bottom with textiles and, in particular, tapestries depicting figurative compositions. Leaving aside the hangings of embroidery and precious woven materials, the inventory records more than 2,700 tapestries divided among fourteen palaces, lesser residences, and four Removing Wardrobes. Although this number was swelled by several hundred bed and window covers, the collection included more than three hundred sets of wall hangings made up of three or more pieces. While some of these were of modest dimensions, others covered hundreds of square meters. Assuming an average length of about 3 meters per panel, a conservative estimate, the tapestries would have measured more than five kilometers if placed end to end. They embraced every conceivable subject, and while many had long been in the royal collection, a large number were acquired by Henry himself, including about twenty gold-woven sets. Indeed, during the years of the Reformation it was in the medium of tapestry rather than painting, fresco, or engraving that Henry commissioned the figurative works of art that were designed to substantiate his new status as head of the Church of England (see cat. no. 48).<sup>2</sup>

Henry VIII's collection was extraordinary in size because it had been swelled by the appropriations he made from courtiers, ecclesiastics, and religious institutions that fell into royal disfavor during the English Reformation. But the ubiquitous presence of tapestry in his palaces was typical of the age (fig. 2). No complete lists have survived of the tapestry collections of his contemporaries Francis I, king of France, and Charles V, king of Spain (as

Charles I) and Holy Roman Emperor, but partial inventories and purchase documentation demonstrate that tapestry was also the preeminent figurative art form at the courts of these monarchs. Francis, well known as a sophisticated connoisseur of the arts, spent much larger sums on tapestries designed by the Italian artists whose work he so admired, such as Raphael, Giulio Romano, and Primaticcio, than on any other medium by these same artists (see cat. nos. 24, 41–44, 55).<sup>3</sup> For Charles and his sister Mary of Hungary, tapestry was first and foremost a medium in which Habsburg power was glorified.<sup>4</sup> In some cases this took an indirect form, as in the nine-piece set of the *Honors* (see cat. no. 17), an allegorical celebration of the values of the Habsburg emperors.<sup>5</sup> In others it was more explicit, as in the seven-piece set of the *Battle of Pavia* (see cat. no. 36), woven in the late 1520s from designs by the leading Brussels artist of the day, Bernaert van Orley, to commemorate the decisive victory of the imperial army over the French at Pavia in 1525.<sup>6</sup> Twenty years later, the crusade that Charles led to Tunis against the Berber pirate Kheir-ed-Din (Barbarossa) was also illustrated in a set of twelve tapestries designed by Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen (see cat. no. 50).<sup>7</sup> Woven between 1548 and 1554, this was transported across the English Channel to provide a backdrop for the marriage of Philip II and Mary, queen of England, at Winchester Cathedral in 1554.<sup>8</sup>

The taste for tapestry was not confined to the northern courts. Pope Leo X, wishing to augment the splendor of the Sistine Chapel, commissioned Raphael in 1515 to design a set of tapestries depicting scenes from the lives of the apostles Peter and Paul (see cat. nos. 18–23).<sup>9</sup> Subsequently, he was to order at least two other large tapestry sets before his death in 1521 (see cat. nos. 26, 27), with imagery designed to celebrate the power of the church and the papacy at a time when its influence was threatened in the north by the rise of Lutheranism and around the Mediterranean by the strength of the Turks. Nor was Leo alone among Italian patrons in choosing tapestry as a medium of art and propaganda. When the *Acts of the Apostles* were first displayed in the Sistine Chapel on December 26, 1521, the Venetian connoisseur Marcantonio Michiel



wrote that they were considered one of the finest things of their kind that had ever been made, surpassing the tapestries in the “anticamera” of the previous pope, Julius II; the ones woven for the Gonzaga from designs by Mantegna; and those made for the king of Naples.<sup>10</sup> Although these other ensembles are long since lost, along with all knowledge of their appearance and origins, documentation suggests that they were just the tip of the iceberg. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Italian patrons lavished enormous sums on figurative tapestry. Most were woven from designs by Netherlandish artists, but some of the most innovative series were made from designs or cartoons that Italian patrons sent to the main weaving centers in the Netherlands. A smaller number of tapestries from designs by Italian artists were produced at workshops established in Italy by Netherlandish and French weavers under the direct control of such Italian Maecenases as the Este and the Gonzaga.<sup>11</sup> During the second third of the sixteenth century, this tradition was to be revived by the descendants of these families and other princes of the day. Important workshops were established in Ferrara and Mantua during the 1530s, which produced designs by Battista Dossi and Giulio Romano, among others. In turn, these workshops provided the inspiration, and some of the staff, for the most ambitious foundation of this kind in Italy, the manufactories established by Cosimo I de’ Medici in the mid-1540s in Florence, where designs by Bronzino, Salviati, and Giorgio Vasari were produced (cat. nos. 60–63).<sup>12</sup>

If tapestry was the most widely commissioned figurative art form in the courts and chapels of the period, from Scandinavia to the Italian peninsula, it was also, in its finer forms, one of the most expensive. Leo X’s *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries were reputed to have cost between 1,600 and 2,000 ducats each, so the set of ten must have cost some 16,000 ducats or more (more than five times the amount that, according to Vasari, Michelangelo was paid for painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel).<sup>13</sup> When Henry VIII purchased a large set of the *Story of David* in 1528, it cost just over 1,500 English pounds, equivalent to the price of a battleship or the annual income of all but the richest dukes of the kingdom.<sup>14</sup> At this level, tapestry was, along with jewelry and silver and gold plate, one of the most important ingredients of princely magnificence. Descriptions of the greatest court festivals invariably mention the sumptuous tapestries that were displayed. Such demonstrations were viewed as an index of a magnate’s wealth and power—or lack thereof. During the visit that Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, paid in 1527 to Pope Clement VII, then in exile in Orvieto following the Sack of Rome, it was the absence of such trappings that was most indicative of the sorry state of his situation. Gardiner reported back to London: “Before reaching his privy chamber we passed three chambers all naked and unchanged, the roofs fallen down, and as we can guess, 30 persons, riff raff and other, standing in the chamber for a garnishment.” Gardiner calculated that the furniture in the pope’s bedchamber was not worth 20 nobles, bed and all.<sup>15</sup>

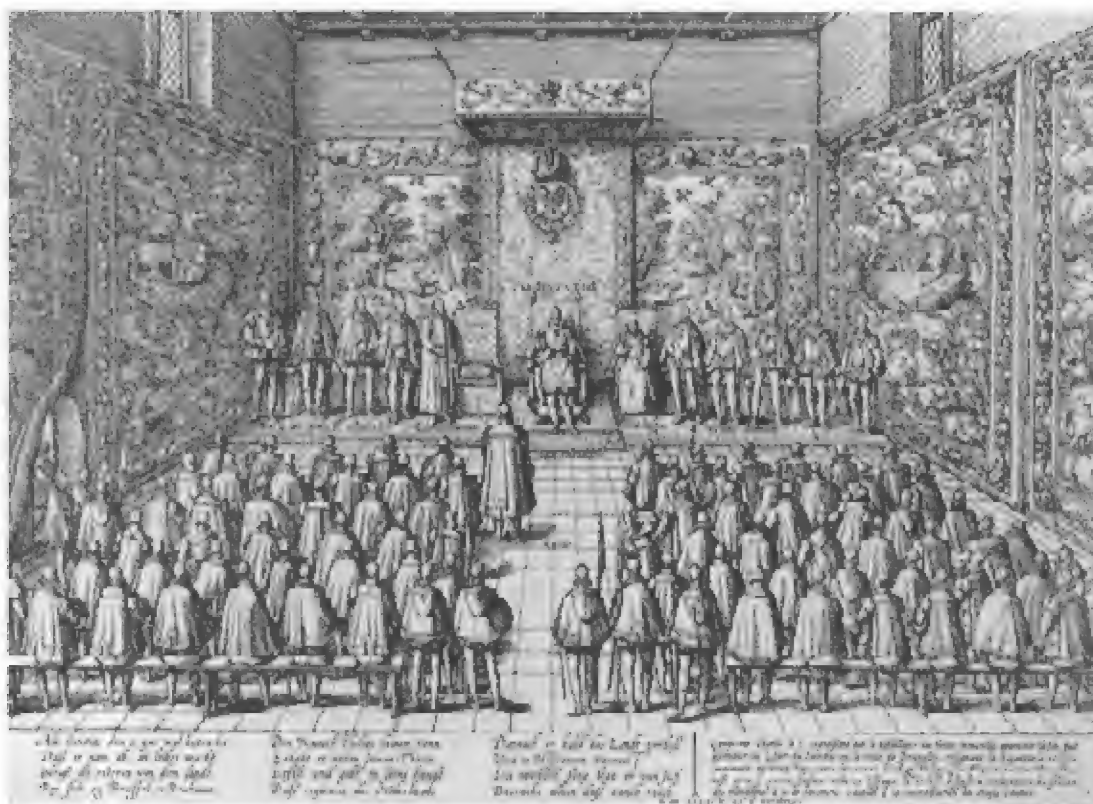


Fig. 2. *The Abdication of Charles V* from *Events in the History of the Netherlands, France, Germany, and England between 1535 and 1608*. Later impression of an engraving by Frans Hogenberg, ca. 1558. 19.8 x 27.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959 (59.570.200[11])



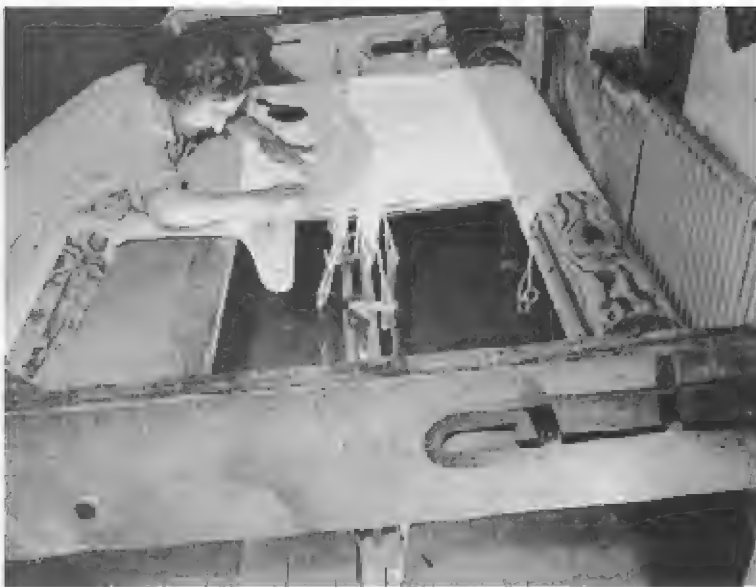


Fig. 3. View of a weaver working on a low-warp loom



Fig. 4. View of the back of a tapestry being woven on a low-warp loom

Despite the central role that figurative tapestry played in the art, propaganda, and liturgy of the courts and churches of late medieval and Renaissance Europe, the medium has been largely overlooked in comparison to the attention that has been paid by both scholars and the general public to other art forms. A variety of factors have contributed to this neglect, of which the most significant is probably the unfamiliarity of a modern audience with the tapestry medium. It is therefore useful to discuss briefly the way tapestries were woven and the criteria by which they were judged.

#### HOW TAPESTRIES ARE MADE

The word "tapestry" is now widely used to describe a range of textiles, including needlepoint and certain mechanically woven, ribbed fabrics, but historically and technically it designates a figurative weft-faced textile woven by hand on a loom.<sup>16</sup> In European practice, the loom consists of two rollers, between which plain warp threads (the load-bearing threads) are stretched. In the industrialized production of the large Netherlandish centers the warps were made of wool, although linen was also used in more artisanal production in Germany. Depending on the orientation of the loom, the warps are stretched vertically (on a high-warp loom) or horizontally (on a low-warp loom; fig. 3); in both cases the weaver works on the reverse side of the tapestry. The warps are arranged so there is a small space between the even and the odd warps, called the shed, through which the weaver passes the colored weft threads that are wrapped around a handheld shuttle (fig. 4). Alternate warps are attached to drawstrings with which the weaver can pull them forward (on the high-warp loom)

or backward (on the low-warp loom) to create a second shed, through which the weft is then passed back again. By passing the weft back and forth through the two sheds, the weaver inserts the weft over one warp and under the next in one direction and then back in the opposite direction over and under the alternate warps (fig. 5). Periodically the weaver beats down the developing web so that the warps are completely covered by the weft (fig. 6). Nowadays, the weft threads are primarily made of finely twisted wool, but in the past finer tapestries also included silk and gilt-metal-wrapped silk. By varying the colors of the weft, the weaver creates a pattern or figurative image. Between 1400 and 1530, the Netherlandish weavers developed the ability to reproduce an extraordinary range of surface textures and painterly effects through the use of finer and finer interlocking triangles of color (*hachures*), the juxtaposition of different materials, and the use of different techniques to link the weft threads (some of which left slits between adjacent warps, providing added definition or texture).

In European medieval and Renaissance practice, the design was invariably copied from a full-scale colored pattern, known as the cartoon, a practice that continues to this day. Before starting work, the weaver traces the pattern from the cartoon onto the bare warps. With the high-warp loom, the cartoon is then hung behind the weaver; with the low-warp loom, it was traditionally folded or cut into strips and placed directly beneath the warp threads, creating a proximity that is especially useful for the weaver in the case of complex designs. An additional advantage of the low-warp loom is that the drawstrings used by the weaver to create the sheds are controlled by foot pedals, leaving both of the weaver's hands free to pass the weft. On the high-warp loom the drawstrings

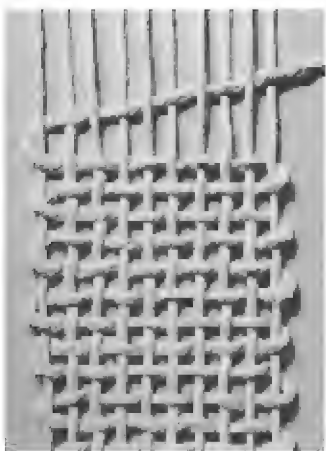


Fig. 5. Model of plain weave

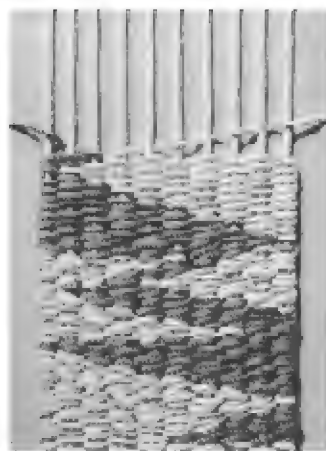


Fig. 6. Model of weft-faced tapestry weave

are manipulated by hand so the process is slower. The disadvantage of the low-warp technique is that it reverses the orientation of the cartoon, since the weaver is copying the front of the cartoon from the back of the tapestry. The designer therefore needs to create the cartoon to be used for the low-warp technique in the direction opposite to the one intended for the completed tapestry. There is otherwise little physical distinction between the product of the high- and low-warp looms. The low-warp technique was the predominant mode of production throughout the medieval and Renaissance period because of the advantages it offered in terms of speed of production and reproduction of complex designs.

The quality of a tapestry depends mainly on four variable factors: the quality of the cartoon from which it is copied; the skill of the weavers at translating the design into woven form; the fineness of the weave (the number of warps per centimeter and the grade of the weft, which directly affect the precision of detail and pictorial quality of the tapestry); and the quality of the materials from which it is made. In the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the cost of a tapestry varied enormously in direct proportion to its quality. One of the key factors was the manpower involved. Production was a labor-intensive process requiring the participation of many skilled weavers for the execution of large tapestries. On the basis of both modern practice and documented production, it is generally estimated that weavers could produce up to one square meter of coarse tapestry per month. Higher-quality production, with a finer warp and weft count, was much slower, yielding perhaps half a square meter per month.<sup>17</sup> A large tapestry, 5 meters high by 8 meters wide, woven in wool alone, with a warp count of approximately five per centimeter, would have taken five weavers some eight months or so to weave. If finer materials were used, resulting in a higher warp count, it could

take twice as long. Production of a set of six 5-by-8-meter tapestries would therefore have necessitated the equivalent of thirty weavers over a period of between eight and sixteen months, excluding the cost and time involved in the design and preparation of the cartoons and the setting up of the looms.

An even more significant factor than labor in determining the cost of a tapestry was the material from which it was made. Wool, generally from England or Spain, was the principal material used for warps and most of the weft. Finer-quality pieces also incorporated silk (from Italy or Spain), and the finest included silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped silk thread (from Venice or Cyprus). Documents relating to the levy charged for different grades of tapestry imported to England during the first half of the sixteenth century indicate that tapestry woven with silk cost four times more than that woven with coarse wool. The inclusion of metallic thread increased the cost by a factor of twenty over tapestry woven with coarse wool alone.<sup>18</sup> While such valuations are general and the prices would have been dependent on the circumstances in which tapestries were made and sold, documentary evidence confirms the extreme variation of price.

#### HOW TAPESTRIES HAVE BEEN PERCEIVED

If the unfamiliar nature of the tapestry process has impeded modern appreciation of the medium and obscured the criteria that distinguished good weaving from bad and high-quality products from low, the patchy nature (in both senses) of what survives has also played a part. Historically, the finest tapestries were only hung for special occasions, but with the passage of time and changing fashions of interior decoration, such observances were neglected in numbers of collections from the late seventeenth century. During the eighteenth century many of the grandest medieval and Renaissance tapestries ended up as permanent fixtures—hastening the fading of their colors and the deterioration of their silk—often overhung with paintings and mirrors. This happened to many of the finest sets in the British royal collection, which were installed under William III in the royal palaces, where they hung without interruption until they were taken down and presumably destroyed in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Today, only thirty or so of the tapestries once in Henry VIII's collection survive in the royal collection. In other cases the destruction was less benign. Many of Francis I's most valuable tapestries survived until the end of the eighteenth century, only to be burned by the French Directory in 1797 to extract the metallic thread so the debts of the royal wardrobe could be settled.<sup>20</sup> The example of this state-sanctioned vandalism seems to have encouraged an equally pernicious destruction elsewhere. For instance, a number of the finest tapestries in the Vatican



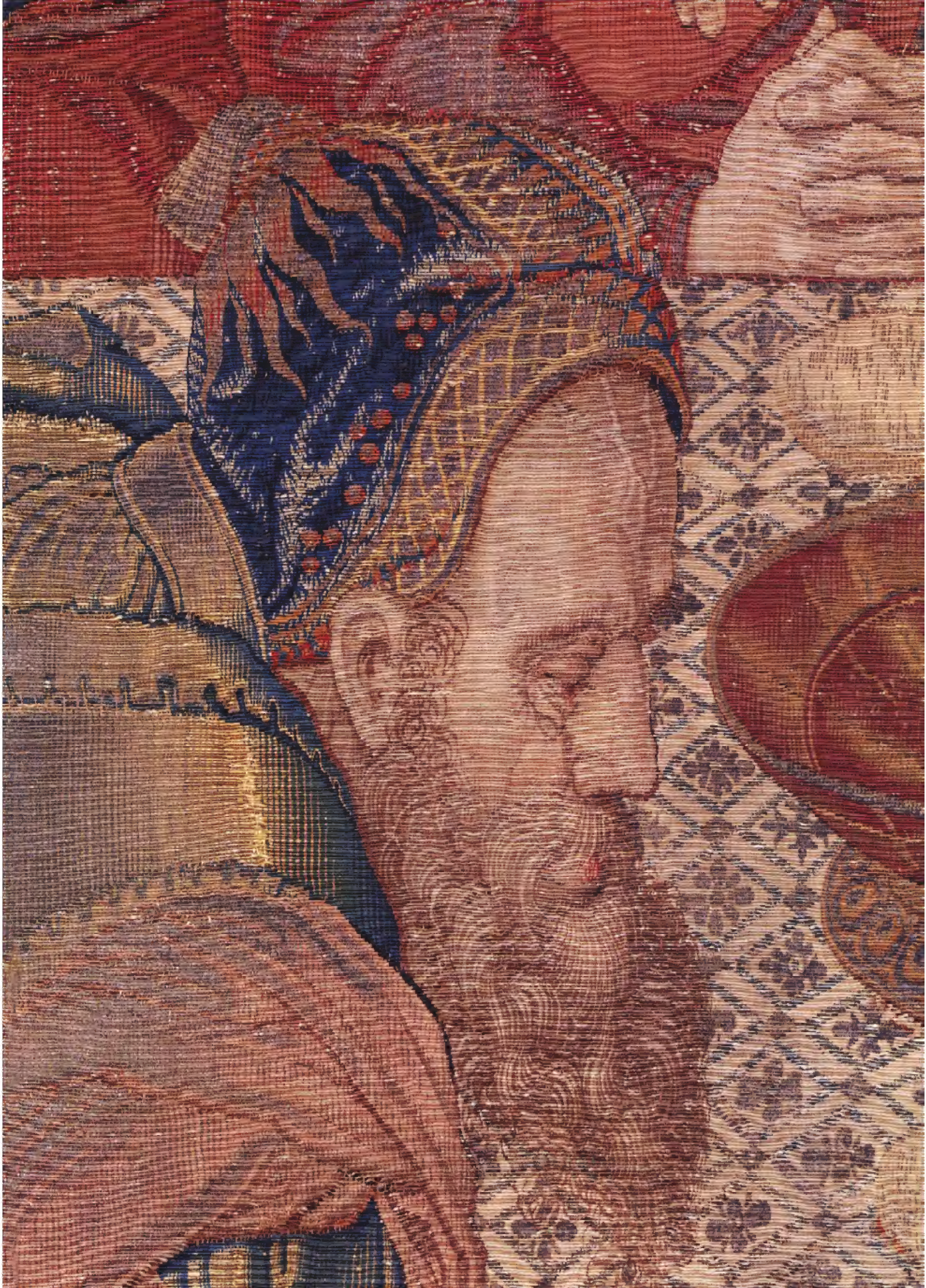






Fig. 8. Front of *Saint Michael Fighting the Dragon*, detail of the third tapestry from the *Apocalypse*. Tapestry designed by Jan Boudolf, woven in the workshop of Robert Poinçon, Paris, ca. 1373–80. Wool, detail 171 x 250 cm. Château, Angers



Fig. 9. Back of fig. 8, *Saint Michael Fighting the Dragon*



collections disappeared during the French subjugation of Rome between 1797 and 1814. Benign neglect and active vandalism have ensured that only a fraction of the great tapestry collections of the medieval and Renaissance eras have survived.

Another factor that has obscured the significance of high-quality tapestries in the culture of the past is the condition of what does survive. Tapestries, like other textiles, are highly vulnerable to the passage of time—overexposure to light causes the dyes to fade and the silk to become brittle and eventually disintegrate; dampness leads to oxidization of the metallic thread; and insect damage and bad repairs also destroy the unity of a tapestry's surface. The common perception of historic tapestries today is of faded, rather shabby hangings that provide the setting for more interesting sculptures and paintings. It comes as something of a surprise to see the reverse of a tapestry that has survived in good repair with the original intensity of color (figs. 8, 9).

Although physical factors have had a negative impact on the appreciation of historic tapestry, other issues have also played a part. The interrelated contributions made by the designers, cartoonists, weavers, and financiers are complex and often poorly documented. The tapestry medium has suffered from the emphasis placed by most schools of art history during the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries on the fine arts at the expense of the decorative arts and from the associated emphasis on connoisseurship in the realms of painting and drawing. So far as the Renaissance is concerned, the long-standing bias in favor of the Italian arts at the expense of Northern artists and their achievements, which can be traced to the influence of Vasari's *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, has also played a part in distracting attention from the historic significance of tapestry, from the contribution made by many of the leading artists of the day as tapestry designers, and from the achievement in this medium of the Northern artists—many of whom were unknown to Vasari.

Even when art historians have considered the tapestry medium, they have often approached the subject as though it were panel or wall painting, unaware of the extent to which the function and nature of the medium imposed and encouraged aesthetic solutions that were peculiar to it alone and different from those of frescoes, panel paintings, and drawings. Ironically, Vasari, whose written work has indirectly contributed to the historic disregard of tapestry, was well aware of these particular needs from his own experience as a tapestry designer. Describing one of Salviati's tapestry designs, he wrote: "Into that cartoon Francesco put all the diligence that could possibly be devoted to such a work, and that

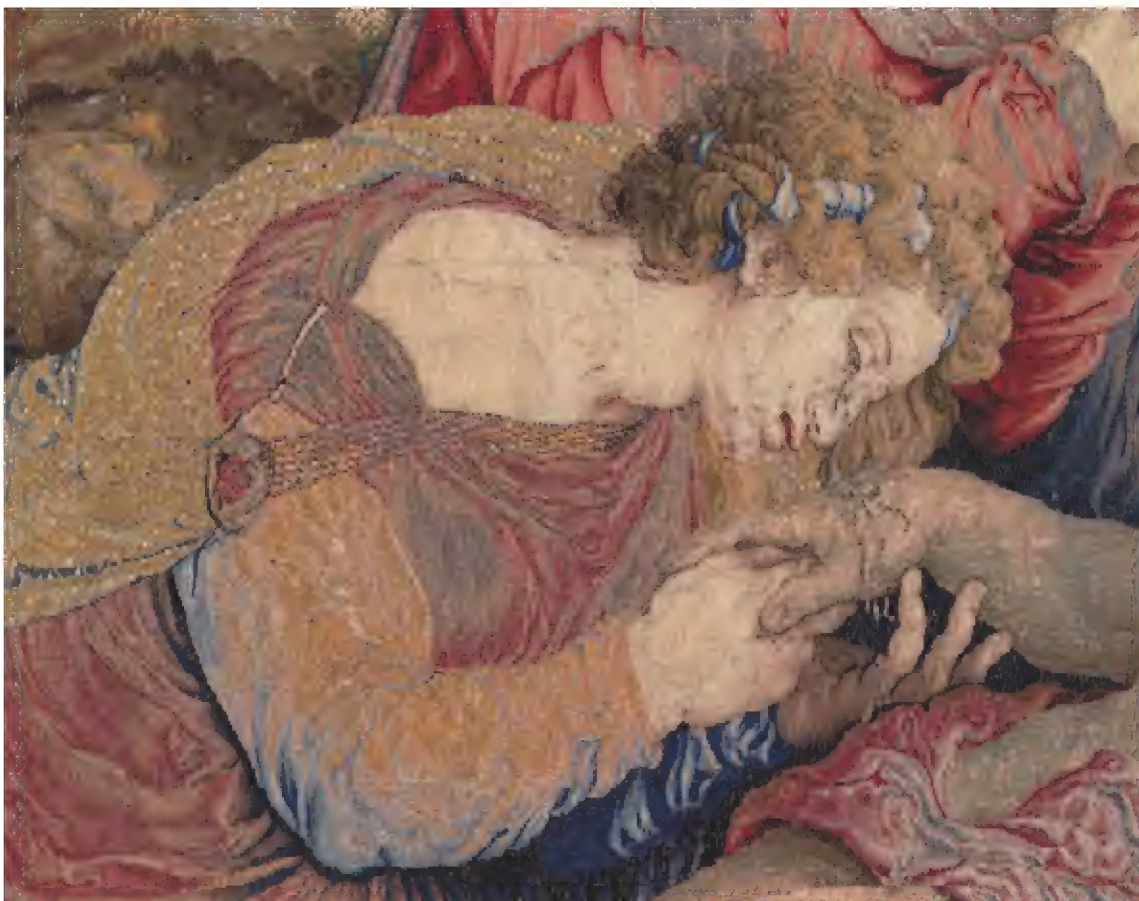


Fig. 10. Detail of cat. no. 63:  
*The Lamentation*. Tapestry designed  
by Francesco Salviati, woven in the  
workshop of Nicolas Karcher,  
Florence, ca. 1549

is required for pictures that are to be woven; for there must be fantastic inventions and variety of composition in the figures, and these must stand out one from another, so that they may have strong relief, and they must come out bright in colouring and rich in the costumes and vestments.”<sup>21</sup>

If the importance of tapestry during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance has been partly obscured by a tradition of criticism that derives from Vasari, a second misleading impetus was generated more recently. William Morris, the highly influential nineteenth-century English designer and craftsman, celebrated the greatest achievements of medieval tapestry design along with the other art forms of that era. Yet in doing so he was dismissive of the more pictorial style of design that had developed in the sixteenth century.<sup>22</sup> According to this view, sixteenth-century designs betrayed the true linear and decorative character of the tapestry medium, in favor of a slavish imitation of wall painting. Under the influence of twentieth-century notions of abstract design and pattern, this bias was reiterated by many contemporary weavers and historians. As the content of this publication and the exhibition it accompanies demonstrate, the situation was much more complex and interesting than this simplistic viewpoint allowed.

The foundations for a deeper understanding of the historic significance of the tapestry medium were laid in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by local historians and art historians, who began unearthing documentation relating to tapestry production in Netherlandish, French, German, and Italian towns. These researches were incorporated in the first scholarly histories of tapestry production, such as those published by Guiffrey, Müntz, and Pinchart during the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s.<sup>23</sup> The broad shape developed by these early works was furthered by the publication of the first scholarly catalogues of some of the more important collections, such as those of the Spanish crown and the Austrian State Collection.<sup>24</sup> Much of this material was then synthesized in a variety of general histories written during the first third of the twentieth century, of which the most comprehensive was Göbel's three-volume encyclopedia of European tapestry production (now outdated in many details, but still the basic encyclopedia on the subject).<sup>25</sup> Although relatively few survey works of note were published during the second two-thirds of the century, with the exception of publications by Jarry, Viale Ferrero, Heinz, and d'Hulst,<sup>26</sup> an enormous amount of new research has since appeared in scholarly articles, exhibition catalogues, museum-collection catalogues, and monographs on artists or specific design series. The bibliography in this book provides a guide to the wealth of publications and to the scholars who have played a part in opening up this fascinating subject. Where much of the work

of the second third of the twentieth century was focused on the artists who designed tapestries and the often puzzling question of the identity of the merchants and weavers responsible for their production, research of the last two decades has been characterized by a renewed interest in the patrons for whom the tapestries were made and the context in which tapestries were created and used.

Despite the advances in our knowledge of medieval and Renaissance tapestry production and patronage, there has nonetheless been a dearth of exhibitions and publications that provide a synthetic approach to the material, and in particular, that consider the artistic significance of the tapestry medium during the Renaissance. An exhibition devoted to sixteenth-century production, illustrated by tapestries from French collections, was organized by the Mobilier National in Paris in 1965, and a highly successful exhibition of late medieval and early Renaissance tapestries took place sequentially in Paris and New York in 1973–74. In 1976 an important exhibition of early sixteenth-century Brussels production was mounted in that city, and a seminal exhibition devoted to the designs of the Antwerp master Pieter Coecke van Aelst was held at Schloss Halbturn in 1981. Since then, a number of smaller exhibitions have featured highlights from the rich holdings of the Spanish royal collection.<sup>27</sup> But there has never been an international loan exhibition devoted exclusively to the stylistic development and cultural significance of tapestry through the late medieval and High Renaissance eras.

A similar lacuna exists in the general publications in the field. Although there have been some superb publications devoted to specific collections or particular design series in recent years, there have been very few overviews of the subject.<sup>28</sup> Cavallo's 1993 catalogue of the medieval collection at the Metropolitan Museum included a useful introduction to medieval patronage and production. More recently, Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand (1995) and Delmarcel (1999) have covered the medieval and Renaissance periods in the context of larger surveys of tapestry production between the fifteenth and the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> In all three studies, however, the goal of covering the tapestry industry in general during the periods in question ensured that consideration of the high-quality production and the interface among patrons, artists, and producers was necessarily abbreviated to take account of the larger volume of concurrent low- and medium-quality work.

#### THE AIM OF THIS STUDY

This book and the exhibition it accompanies have been conceived to bring the splendors of Netherlandish, French, and Italian Renaissance tapestry production to the attention of a broader public,



with a particular focus on the two-way traffic that existed between the Italian peninsula and the centers of production in northern Europe in terms of both design and labor. This study is focused primarily on the century between 1460 and 1560—although one important work, the *Passion* tapestry from San Marco (cat. no. 7), dates from the 1420s and essays in the book consider the development of the European industry from the late fourteenth century. Within these parameters, the presentation has three main themes: the extent to which the tapestry medium reflected the personal tastes and aspirations of the patrons, and the role tapestry played in the daily and ceremonial life of the times; the contribution made by key artists of the day to the stylistic development of high-quality tapestry design in the Netherlands, Italy, and France; and the financial and physical circumstances that enabled the production of these enormous, costly works of art.

The exhibition and catalogue are divided into ten roughly chronological sections, concentrating on the historical and artistic aspects of the tapestries. In the book, each section starts with an introductory essay, followed by catalogue entries. The essays vary in character from broad surveys to detailed analyses of seminal sets and designs. Similarly, the catalogue entries range from lengthy discussions of objects that are dealt with only peripherally in the

introductory essays to brief citations for objects that have been treated at length in the previous essay. Detailed technical analysis of the objects has not been done because of the diverse locations from which the tapestries have been drawn and the time limitations imposed by the exhibition's conception and organization. The condition reports given here are perfunctory for the same reason. Since this study is not a catalogue raisonné, the references listed for the individual tapestries are limited to the most authoritative ones, with an indication of where a more complete bibliography can be found. Cross-references throughout the book have been kept to a minimum on the assumption that the reader wishing to know more about a particular patron, artist, merchant, or master weaver will refer to the index. Although the scale of the subject necessarily ensures that many points covered in this exhibition can be treated only superficially, the notes and bibliography are designed to provide a guide to the vast amount of scholarly activity that has taken place in the field in recent years. I hope that this publication, besides commemorating an exhibition that will be truly outstanding in its content, will serve as an introduction to a fascinating but often neglected field, whose finest achievements deserve to be ranked among the greatest artistic creations of the Renaissance.

1. Starkey 1998.
2. T. Campbell 1998a, esp. pp. 200–251.
3. Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a; Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 363–68, 376–86.
4. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 99–100, and passim.
5. Delmarcel in Mechelen 2000.
6. Casali, Fraccaro, and Prina 1993.
7. Horn 1989.
8. Buchanan 1999, pp. 132–33.
9. Shearman 1972; Fermor 1996.
10. “Queste feste di Natale il Papa messe fuori in Capella 7 pezzi di razzo perché l’ottavo non era fornito fatti in ponente, che furono giudicati la più bella cosa, che sia stata fatta in eo genere a nostri giorni, benché fussino celebre li razzi di Papa Giulio de l’anticamera, li razzi del Marchese di Mantova del disegno del Mantegna et li razzi di Alfonso, overo Federico Re di Napoli”; Golzio 1936, pp. 103–4; quoted in Shearman 1972, p. 38, n. 75, and Smit 1993b, p. 58, n. 3.
11. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 29–59.
12. Ibid., pp. 60–94; Adelson 1990; Meoni 1998.
13. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 7, p. 178.
14. T. Campbell 1996b.
15. Brewer, Brodie, and Gairdner 1862–1932, vol. 5, no. 4090.
16. For an extensive discussion of the different types of loom and the technical process involved in weaving tapestry, see Tabard 1978.
17. Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 43–44; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 14.
18. T. Campbell 1995–96, pp. 32–33; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 200–204.
19. T. Campbell 1994.
20. Guiffrey 1888.
21. “[N]el quale cartone, dico, mise Francesco tutta quella diligenza che in simile opera si può maggiore, e che hanno di bisogno le pitture che si tessono: invenzione capriciose, componimenti varj vogliono aver le figure che spicchino l’una dall’altra, perchè abbiano rilievo e venghino allegre ne’ colori, ricche nelli abiti e vestiri”; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 7, p. 28; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 2, p. 571.
22. Morris 1898, p. 25; Parry 1983, p. 103.
23. Guiffrey 1878–85; Müntz 1878–85; Pinchart 1878–85; Müntz 1897; Guiffrey 1904a; Guiffrey 1904b.
24. Valencia de Don Juan 1903; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919; Birk 1883–84; Baldass 1920.
25. W. G. Thomson 1906 (rev. ed., 1930); Hunter 1912; Göbel 1923; Hunter 1925; Göbel 1928; Ackerman 1933; Göbel 1933–34.
26. D’Hulst 1960; Viale Ferrero 1961a; Viale Ferrero 1961b; Heinz 1963; Jarry 1968.
27. New York 1991; Munich, Mechelen, and Amsterdam 1993; Brussels 2000; Mechelen 2000.
28. Important collection catalogues of the past three decades include Cavallo 1967 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); Standen 1985 (Metropolitan Museum post-medieval tapestries); Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986 (Spanish royal collection); Cavallo 1993 (Metropolitan Museum medieval tapestries); Forti Grazzini 1994 (Palazzo del Quirinale, Rome); and Adelson 1994 (Minneapolis Institute of Arts). Important monographs on individual series include Shearman 1972 (*Acts of the Apostles*); Horn 1989 (*Conquest of Tunis*); Balis et al. 1993 (*Hunts of Maximilian*); and Mechelen 2000 (*the Honors*).
29. Cavallo 1993, pp. 17–81; Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 8–75; Lefébure in *ibid.*, pp. 76–137; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 7–208.







# Tapestry Patronage in Northern Europe, 1380-1500

**E**yewitness accounts of life in the courts of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries abound in descriptions that mention the use of tapestries. Whether hung in the banqueting halls and private chambers of kings and nobles or draped in streets and cathedrals for public ceremonies and religious feast days, these woven frescoes were a central element in contemporary spectacle and magnificence. It is therefore appropriate to begin this study by focusing on the patrons for whom these tapestries were being made and how the tapestries were used. Who were these patrons? To what extent were they involved in determining the richness, subject matter, and style of their acquisitions? How much did long-standing traditions formalize and determine usage? Were tapestries considered furnishings, works of art, or objects of material value?

The starting point for any examination of these questions must be a recognition of the sheer cost of the medium. During the medieval and Renaissance eras only the prosperous members of society could afford to buy even coarse forms of tapestry, and more expensive pieces woven with silk, silver, and gilt-metal thread were the preserve of a privileged few. As this exhibition is concerned above all with the artistic and political contribution that tapestry made to contemporary culture, and as the finest figurative tapestries were also the most expensive, the following discussion is therefore largely concerned with the patronage of royal families and the leading nobility and ecclesiastical figures of the day.<sup>1</sup>

Using expensive fabrics to demonstrate wealth and to provide comfort and decoration dates, of course, from the earliest times. Although documentation relating to the use of textiles in the early medieval era is incomplete and the terminology is obscure, from the eleventh and twelfth centuries luxury textiles are recorded in increasing numbers in the households of the European aristocracy, and a significant number of those documented from the beginning of the fourteenth century were woven in the tapestry technique.<sup>2</sup> The appeal and importance of tapestry and other luxury textiles at this time are easy to understand for they humanized the huge and drafty interiors of medieval castles, providing insulation and color. The furniture of the period consisted of wooden frames over which padding and textiles were draped and tied, and

tapestry also provided a durable medium for this purpose. Indeed, many of the earliest tapestry ensembles included bed hangings and furniture covers as well as wall hangings.

If tapestries and luxury textiles provided warmth, comfort, and decoration, they also had the advantage of being portable, a key factor in an age when powerful households were constantly on the move—for political reasons or for seasonal hunting. Woven primarily in wool, with thick, tightly packed yarns, medieval tapestries were more robust than other luxury textiles like silk damask and velvet, and they could easily be rolled up and dispatched on carts ahead of the main party to be hung by the time the group arrived. Many castle chambers were equipped with hooks fixed



Fig. 12. *Charles VI with the Author and Three Nobles*. Miniature painting by the Boucicaut Master, in Pierre Salmon's *Réponses de Pierre Salmon*, after 1411. 26.5 x 19.5 cm. Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Geneva (MS fr. 165, fol. 4r)

Fig. 11. *January* (detail). Miniature painting by the Limbourg brothers, in the *Très riches heures* of the duke of Berry, ca. 1410. Musée Condé, Chantilly (MS 65, fol. 1 v)





Fig. 13. *Richard II Surrenders His Crown to Henry of Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby*. Miniature painting in a copy of Froissart's *Chronicles*, France, ca. 1470. British Library, London (MS Harl. 4380, fol. 184)



Fig. 14. *The King with a Dominican*. Miniature painting in the *Book of Hours* of Alfonso V of Aragon, Spain (?), ca. 1450. British Library, London (Add. MS 28962, fol. 14v)

permanently into the walls beneath the vaults, so the plainest rooms could be transformed into bright, colorful interiors in the time it took to unroll and hang the tapestries.

Quite apart from its practical value, the tapestry medium had a further attraction. Tapestry was made by hand, which allowed weavers to create complex figurative designs that were impossible to achieve on the semimechanized looms used to produce other luxury fabrics. The tapestry medium was thus eminently suitable for the production of individualized designs, whether figurative, decorative, or heraldic. And in contrast to other woven textiles, in which technology generally limited the fabric to widths of under a meter, a tapestry loom could be several meters wide, facilitating the production of much larger hangings.

Judging from contemporary inventories, most early medieval tapestries were characterized by repeating decorative and heraldic patterns, much like the satin damasks and embroidered cloths of the day, although we can assume that some figurative production also existed. From the middle of the fourteenth century, however, both the volume and the character of European production changed. Whereas in the first half of the century the inventories of the rich frequently mention two or three tapestry chambers and a handful of tapestry wall hangings, the inventories of the 1360s, 1370s, and 1380s reveal a significant increase in the numbers of tapestries with narrative subjects. Although we simply know too little about the previous era to make definitive assumptions,

there seems little question that the larger numbers reflect a new appreciation of the tapestry medium. This in turn stimulated (and financed) unprecedented production of narrative tapestries, of which the finest were of enormous scale, material richness, and iconographic complexity.<sup>3</sup>

Nowhere is this phenomenon more pronounced than in the patronage of the sons of John II (1319–1364, r. 1350–64), the Valois king of France. Well-known as sophisticated patrons of architecture, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, precious metalwork, and jewelry, these four brothers, urged on by one another's example, all committed enormous sums to the purchase of scores and scores of tapestries during the second half of the fourteenth century. For example, by the time of his death Charles V (1338–1380, king of France from 1364), in addition to what he inherited, had amassed more than two hundred tapestries.<sup>4</sup> His younger brother, Louis (1339–1384; duke of Anjou from 1360 and king of Naples and Sicily from 1382 to 1384), best known for his enormous collection of precious metalwork, seems to have been equally drawn to the richness and splendor of the tapestry medium. An inventory taken in 1364 shows that by the age of twenty-five he already owned more than seventy tapestries, and during the 1370s and 1380s he made many other purchases.<sup>5</sup> The inventory taken at the death of Philip (1342–1404, duke of Burgundy from 1363), lists more than one hundred tapestries, a number that includes purchases from Louis's estate.<sup>6</sup> The 1416 inventory of John (1340–1416, duke of Berry



from 1360) documents a collection of more than thirty large figurative panels and several large tapestry chambers.<sup>7</sup> While some of these tapestries were woven in wool alone, many others were executed in precious materials at a cost of thousands of francs. Quite apart from their richness, significant numbers of them were of enormous dimensions.

Motivating this patronage was a new awareness of the contribution that tapestries could make to the patron's magnificence. This concept, which can be characterized as the public demonstration of power and wealth through lavish and tasteful expenditure and generosity, derived from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It received renewed attention in the medieval era through contemporary translations, including one of about 1370–77 by Nicolas Oresme, a councillor and chaplain to Charles V of France. Tapestry was the perfect medium of ostentation. Far more than any number of paintings or even sculptures, the scale and richness of tapestry provided a dramatic physical demonstration of the wealth and power of the patron, and as such, it was much more highly valued as a material possession. Tapestry also provided a monumental figurative medium on which the patron could parade images of ancestors, of military conquests, or of the historical and mythological heroes with whom he wished to be associated. In an age when pictorial images of any kind were, of necessity, handmade and therefore rare, an extensive display of high-quality tapestries must have been truly extraordinary, and it is little surprise that, again and again, contemporary documents record the amazement with which eyewitnesses reacted to such spectacles.

The majority of the tapestries acquired by the Valois princes were purchased or commissioned through a relatively small number of merchants, who acted as middlemen between the patrons and the workshops located in Paris, Arras, and elsewhere, negotiating contracts, providing financial advances for supplies and labor, and supervising progress.<sup>8</sup> The circumstances in which most of the designs were conceived are unclear. Armorials were obviously created as specific commissions, and with their repetitive heraldic and decorative elements they were relatively inexpensive to design. Less certain are the circumstances of the large figurative subjects, but the accounts of the duke of Burgundy suggest that in many cases tapestries were purchased from the merchant's stock or were commissioned from cartoons already in the merchant's possession.<sup>9</sup>

Equally, procedures existed for more elaborate custom-made commissions when the patrons were prepared to spend the necessary money. For example, the most remarkable of Louis of Anjou's acquisitions was a six-piece set of the *Apocalypse of Saint John*, which was designed for him by Jan Boudolf (fl. 1368–81), one of the leading artists at the court of his brother Charles V. The

ease with which Louis was able to commission the design from such an important artist and the fact that Boudolf was allowed to borrow a thirteenth-century manuscript of the subject from Charles's famous library as one of his sources suggest the Valois princes' mutual interest in tapestry. Arrangements for production of this set were made by the Parisian merchant Nicolas Bataille, who had supplied Louis with tapestries since 1363 and who supplied him with many more during the 1370s and 1380s. Woven between 1373 and 1380 at a cost of 6,000 francs, the set comprised six panels, each 6 meters high and about 25 meters long, which survive in part at the château of Angers (fig. 15).<sup>10</sup> The location for which the *Apocalypse* tapestries were intended is unclear. It has been suggested that they may have been created as a portable stage set for the ceremonies of the Order of the Cross that Louis established as part of his campaign to be made emperor.<sup>11</sup> The scale was certainly unprecedented and must reflect a conscious decision by Louis to commission a work of art of a monumentality that had never been seen before. Remarkable as the *Apocalypse* tapestries are in size, they are woven only in wool, in contrast to many of the gold-woven tapestries purchased by the Valois dukes.

If Louis of Anjou's patronage is of note for the scale and grandeur of some of his acquisitions, the patronage of his brother Philip the Bold reflects an even more sophisticated vision of the potential of the tapestry medium.<sup>12</sup> From the mid-1380s, Philip committed enormous sums of money to tapestry acquisitions both for his own use and as gifts for family, friends, and allies. In part, this investment seems to have been intended to stimulate the portion of the industry that fell within the dominions of Flanders and Artois, which he had inherited at the death of his father-in-law, Louis II de Male, in 1384. These extravagant gifts were also meant to demonstrate Burgundian magnificence, and they helped cement the status of tapestry as an object of princely attention.

A list of the recipients of Philip's gifts reads like an international who's who of the rich and mighty of the day.<sup>13</sup> For example, prior to the betrothal of his six-year-old daughter, Catherine, to Leopold IV of Austria, she received five tapestries depicting hunting and pastoral scenes for her dowry, and when her marriage eventually took place to Leopold's brother Albert in 1387, the latter received a tapestry of *Charlemagne's Journey to Jerusalem and Byzantium*. The following year John, duke of Berry, received a *Story of the Passion*. During peace negotiations with the English in 1390, the duke of York, uncle to the English king, was presented with a *Story of Octavian* and a *Story of Percival*, and the following year Jehan Canard, the bishop of Arras, was presented with a set of the *Twelve Peers of France*. King Richard II and his uncles, the dukes of York, Lancaster, and Gloucester, received further tapestry gifts



Fig. 15. *The Apocalypse*. Tapestries designed by Jan Boudolf, woven in the workshop of Robert Poinçon, Paris, ca. 1373–80. Wool. Château, Angers

during subsequent negotiations in 1392 and 1397. Other gifts in this period included a set of *Hector of Troy*, presented to Konrad von Jungingen, Master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in 1396, two tapestries of *Saint Antony* presented to Martin, king of Aragon, in 1397, and a number of pieces that were presented to Philip's cousin, Gian Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, during the 1390s.<sup>14</sup> Finally, in one of the most telling gifts of all, Philip sent Sultan Bajazet I a gold-woven set of the *Story of Alexander* in 1399 as part of the ransom for his son John, who had been captured by the Turks at Nicopolis in 1396. This was in response to a specific request by the sultan himself for a fine set of arras.<sup>15</sup>

If Philip's patronage benefited the tapestry industry, it was also groundbreaking in terms of the subjects he commissioned. While many of the tapestries he acquired may have been speculative ventures on the part of the tapestry merchants, he seems to have been responsible for ordering custom pieces as well, such as a three-piece set of the *Story of Fame (Fama)* from Pierre de Beaumetz in 1399, paying the large sum of 3,000 *écus d'or*. The earliest rendition of the theme of Petrarch's *Trionfi* in the tapestry medium, the design was probably based on north Italian manuscripts such as those which Philip may have seen in the collection of Gian Galeazzo Visconti when he visited Italy in 1391.<sup>16</sup> He also appears to have been the first of the Valois princes to envisage and then commit the necessary capital for the development of designs depicting events in his own reign. Although there may have been a long-standing

tradition on the Continent for commemorating historic events in embroidery and textiles—such as the famously misnamed Bayeux “tapestry” embroidery—Philip's commissions are the first certain evidence we have of the treatment of such subjects at the request of a living patron on the monumental scale of tapestry.

The most dramatic exercise in this respect was the tapestry of the *Battle of Roosebeke* that he ordered to commemorate the victory of his forces over the rebellious towns of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres in November 1382. Commissioned in 1384 through an Arras merchant, Michel Bernard, the tapestry was delivered two years later at a total cost of 3,600 gold francs, of which 300 were for the cartoon—the price of a lavish illuminated manuscript.<sup>17</sup> The tapestry was enormous, measuring 5 meters in height and over 41 meters long, and must count as one of the most important and influential works of political art of the Middle Ages. When the duke of Lancaster met Philip at Calais in 1393, he objected to the display of the set, insisting on replacing it with subjects that were more appropriate to the discussions of peace at hand.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, Philip was to commission other propagandistic tapestries such as the *Victories of Bertrand Du Guesclin* and the *King of France and His Twelve Peers* (the latter woven at looms set up at Philip's castle of Hesdin).<sup>19</sup>

Although none of Philip's tapestries have survived, a vivid impression of the contribution that they made to the appearance of the ducal courts is provided by the famous image in the Limbourg brothers' *Très riches heures* (fig. 11) which shows a lord,



possibly the duke of Berry, being served dinner on a textile-covered dais, with an elaborate battle tapestry draped on the wall behind him. The coats of arms of the protagonists are prominently displayed, and inscriptions in the top border provide an explanation of the images below.<sup>20</sup>

John the Fearless (1371–1419), duke of Burgundy from 1404, continued the practices established by his father. The major diplomatic negotiations of his reign were invariably accompanied by generous tapestry gifts such as those distributed to the ambassadors of Henry V, king of England, and Sigismund, king of Hungary, on the occasion of the 1416 treaty signed in Lille.<sup>21</sup> Most of the tapestries that John acquired on his own behalf appear to have been genre and hunting subjects, but he did augment the Burgundian collection with one major tapestry commission, a six-piece set of gold-woven tapestries of the *Battle of Liège* to commemorate the victory he achieved in 1408 (completed in 1411).<sup>22</sup>

The innovations and sophistication of the tapestry patronage of the Valois princes established a model that was widely followed. The French royal collection was expanded by Charles VI (1368–1422), king of France from 1380, with lavish heraldic suites and figurative ensembles. His most ambitious acquisition was arranged through Nicolas Bataille and Jacques Dourdin in 1397, a chamber of thirteen tapestries woven in gold and fine thread of the *Jousts of Saint Denis*, representing festivities held in 1389 to celebrate the knighthood of Louis of Orléans (who was to become an important tapestry patron in his own right) and his cousin, Louis II, duke of Anjou. Measuring 285 square French ells (about 325 sq. m), this enormous ensemble cost a total of 2,743 livres.<sup>23</sup> The size and splendor of the French royal tapestry collection are attested by inventories drawn up in 1422, which list several hundred more tapestries of which many examples included gold thread.<sup>24</sup>

The influence of the Burgundian and French courts was equally marked at the English court. Although the English royal wardrobe included several ensembles of decorative, heraldic, and figurative tapestries by the second third of the fourteenth century, and while there is some evidence that both the crown and the nobility were obtaining armorial tapestries from native workshops in the late fourteenth century, the gifts that Philip the Bold presented to Richard II and his uncles seem to have stimulated an entirely new level of interest in the medium, and it was under Richard, Henry IV, and Henry V that the English royal tapestry collection took shape. Between 1390 and 1430, the English royal collection appears to have grown to more than two hundred tapestries, and while half this number was composed of heraldic ensembles, many of the figurative tapestries included gold thread and were of enormous dimensions.<sup>25</sup> The English conquests in France during the early

1420s provided the English with remarkable opportunities for plunder. As Henry VI was still in his minority, the main advantage appears to have been taken by John of Lancaster, duke of Bedford (1389–1435), the king's regent in France, whose expropriations were recorded in the inventory of the French royal wardrobe.<sup>26</sup> Between 1422 and 1433 Bedford took receipt of more than two hundred tapestries from the French royal collection with an aggregate value of more than 9,000 livres tournois. Some of these ensembles eventually found their way into the English royal collection, such as the enormous set of heraldic hangings woven for Charles VI, which was hung on the walls of the chamber in which Henry VI received the French ambassadors in 1445, along with a dossal woven with the *Story of Clovis*, also looted from the French collection.<sup>27</sup> But the vast majority of the French royal collection, including many magnificent sets, such as the *Jousts of Saint Denis*, disappeared without trace after their acquisition by Bedford. Generally speaking, while most of the tapestries acquired by English patrons during the fifteenth century appear to have been duplicates of designs recorded in Continental inventories, there is evidence that some resulted from specific commissions, such as the tapestries of *Guy of Warwick* in the collection of the earl of Warwick in 1397, or those of the *Siege of Falaise* recorded in the collection of Sir John Fastolf in 1459.<sup>28</sup>

With the occupation of northern France and Paris by the English in 1422 and the political and financial instability of Charles VII during the early years of his reign (1422–61), the French crown ceased to be a major center of tapestry patronage during the second quarter of the fifteenth century, leaving the splendor of the Burgundian court with little close rival. Philip the Good (1396–1467) became duke of Burgundy following the assassination of his father, John the Fearless, in 1419.<sup>29</sup> Employer of artists like Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, Philip is renowned as one of the greatest patrons of the arts and letters of his age. Having spent much of his early reign in territorial disputes with the French king, Charles VII (who had been responsible for Philip's father's assassination), and constantly preoccupied during the 1430s and 1440s with rebellious districts in Holland and Flanders, particularly Ghent, he combined a keen artistic sensibility with a sophisticated sense of the potential of public spectacles and major artworks to promote the stature of the Burgundian house. The most significant demonstration of this instinct was his establishment in 1430 of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a chivalric brotherhood of European rulers and nobles whose regular meetings under Philip's leadership were intended to strengthen emotional and political ties to his sovereignty. With regular income generated by taxes on the principal towns under his rule, Philip was able to embark on extensive building programs at his properties in Bruges, Lille, and

Brussels, and to commission numerous paintings, illuminated manuscripts, and tapestries, many celebrating the biblical and mythological heroes associated with his chivalric order.<sup>30</sup>

An inventory of 1430–32 records some sixty-three sets in the ducal collection, including such important inherited pieces as the *Battle of Roosebeke* and the *Battle of Liège*, and these sets continued to play a key role in the spectacle and diplomacy of the day.<sup>31</sup> For example, during negotiations with England and France in 1435, the abbey of Saint Vaast was hung with the *Battle of Liège* tapestries as a somber reminder of what was at stake.

Like his father and grandfather, Philip also used tapestry as a form of diplomatic gift. Following the 1435 treaty, he rewarded his supporters with tapestries purchased from the Arras-based merchant Jean Walois, and each of the popes elected during his reign were thus favored. Martin V was presented with six tapestries with scenes from the *Life of the Virgin* in 1423—“so that his holiness would maintain the duke in his favor, as well as his friends and servants and all his lands”; Eugenius IV received an allegory of the pope, the emperor, and the nobility in 1440; and Paul II received a six-piece set of *Hannibal* with Philip’s arms in 1466.<sup>32</sup>

But the most remarkable aspect of Philip’s patronage was undoubtedly his new acquisitions. At the time of his death, Philip had increased his collection to almost one hundred sets, some of which numbered ten or more pieces. While some pieces were evidently intended purely for decorative use, many of the most valuable were closely related to dynastic claims and political aspirations. The most important of his acquisitions was a set of the *Story of Gideon*, which Philip commissioned in 1449 to provide a backdrop to ceremonies of the Order of the Golden Fleece.<sup>33</sup> Patron saint of the order, Gideon’s victory over the Mideonites provided a resonant model for Philip and his ambition to liberate the Holy Land from the Turks. The design was provided by Bauduin (Baudouin) de Bailleul, the leading artist in Arras at that date, at a cost of 300 *écus d’or*, and the production was arranged by two Tournai-based tapestry master weavers, Robert Dary and Jehan de l’Ortie. The tapestry, comprising eight pieces with a height of 5.6 meters and a total length of 98 meters, was completed by 1453. It was richly woven in silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, wool, and silk, and cost the enormous sum of 8,960 *écus d’or*. As such, it appears to have been the most expensive artistic project of the era. (The tapestries survived in Brussels until the end of the eighteenth century; they were transported to Vienna in 1794, after which they disappeared.) Philip took a close personal interest in the project, paying Bailleul to bring the completed cartoons to Bruges in 1459 for his inspection and subsequently taking the unusual step of purchasing the cartoons to prevent duplication of the design.

The *Gideon* set appears to have been truly outstanding and drew universal admiration. It was exhibited at all the meetings of the brotherhood and at other significant ducal ceremonies, such as Philip’s visit to Paris following the coronation of Louis XI at Reims in 1461. The chronicles of Georges Chastellain vividly convey the richness of the Burgundian duke’s lodgings at the Hôtel d’Artois and the extent to which they outshone those of the French king. Never in living memory had people seen such opulence, in France or elsewhere, and Parisians of all ranks lined up from morning to night in a long procession throughout the duke’s stay in Paris to see the splendors of his residence (and perhaps to enjoy the wine that was liberally dispensed by his aides). According to Chastellain, the Parisians were impressed above all by the *Story of Gideon* tapestries, which he described as the richest and largest that had ever been made, and by a sumptuous pavilion of embroidered velvet that was erected in the central courtyard.<sup>34</sup> Nobody could visit the Hôtel d’Artois without witnessing this glittering demonstration of the occupant’s immense wealth and the models with whom Philip identified.<sup>35</sup>

The *Alexander* set with which the *Gideon* tapestries were displayed was purchased in 1459 from a Tournai-based merchant, Pasquier Grenier, who became Philip’s principal tapestry supplier during the 1460s, providing him sets of the *Passion* (1461), the *Story of Esther and Ahasuerus*, and the *Story of the Swan Knight* (1462), and chambers with “figures and orange trees” and with “Woodcutters” (1466).<sup>36</sup> Although none of these have survived, an impression of their richness and possibly even of their appearance may well be provided by contemporary weavings of the *Story of Alexander* (Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome; see fig. 25) and the *Story of Esther and Ahasuerus* (cathedral collection, Saragossa).<sup>37</sup>

Although Grenier enjoyed a privileged role during the 1460s, Philip acquired tapestries, both decorative and political, from other sources as well. Purchases from the Lille-based merchant Jehan de Haze in the final years of his life included the famous sequence featuring Philip’s cipher and heraldic device against a millefleurs ground of which a large fragment is extant (figs. 16, 26).<sup>38</sup>

The wealth and splendor of the Burgundian collection by the late 1460s are demonstrated by descriptions of the marriage of Philip’s son Charles to Margaret of York in 1468 at Bruges. According to one chronicle, never before had so many rich tapestries been displayed together: the *Story of Gideon* was hung in a temporary hall erected in the courtyard, the *Battle of Liège* in the Great Hall, the *Story of Clovis* in the Hall of the Chamberlains, the *Story of Begyne and Garin* (dukes of Beline and Lorraine) in the hall before the chapel, and a *Story of Esther* in another hall. The chapel was hung with a gold-woven *Passion* set, while Margaret’s chamber





Fig. 16. *The Banquet of Charles the Bold and Frederick III at Trier*. Manuscript illumination in Diebold Schilling, *Chronik der Burgunderkriege*, 1480. Zentralbibliothek, Zurich (MS A5, fol. 121). The walls are hung with Philip the Good's heraldic millefleurs tapestries

was hung with a suite of textiles with her heraldic colors of white, green, and red.<sup>39</sup>

The lead that Burgundian patronage had set for European courts under Philip the Good faltered under his son, Charles the Bold (1433–1477), duke of Burgundy from 1467, whose aggressive policy to expand the Burgundian domain drained his resources for artistic patronage and ultimately resulted in his death in battle at Nancy in 1477. Charles shared his ancestors' love of the tapestry medium, demonstrating a preference for classical subjects celebrating feats of arms. Contemporary awareness of this interest is reflected in the gift with which he was presented in 1472 by the town and franc of Bruges. This, an eleven-piece set of the *Story of the Trojan War*, was purchased from Pasquier Grenier, the merchant who had supplied so many tapestries to Charles's father, and is the earliest documented weaving of a design that was subsequently duplicated at least six times for other European patrons, including Federico da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino (1476), Henry VII, king of England

(1488), Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary (before 1490), and Charles VIII, king of France (before 1494).<sup>40</sup> The splendor of the textiles and tapestries with which Charles was surrounded in his military campaigns is attested by the vestiges of the loot that the Swiss captured from his camp following the defeat of the Burgundian forces at Granson in 1476, of which a small part survives at Bern in the Historisches Museum.<sup>41</sup>

With Charles's defeat and death at Nancy the tradition of Burgundian tapestry patronage was temporarily arrested. The Burgundian ducal collection passed into the possession of the Habsburg family, in the person of Maximilian I (1459–1519), Holy Roman Emperor from 1493, who had married Charles's daughter Mary of Burgundy in 1477. Not much is known of Maximilian's tapestry patronage during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, but considering his youth and the troubled circumstances of his accession to the Burgundian territories he probably wielded little influence over the Netherlandish industry, at least in the early years of his rule. Yet, if the death of Charles the Bold interrupted the leading role that the Burgundian dukes had played as patrons of the local industry, the loss was more than compensated for by the number of European magnates who wished to emulate the traditions of Valois and Burgundian display. Indeed, the example of the Burgundian court continued to exercise a power over the imagination of other European rulers for decades (for discussion of Italian patronage, see pp. 85–101).

In England, the Burgundian concept of magnificence was propagated by the close links between the courts (Edward IV's sister, Margaret of York, had married Charles the Bold in 1468, as noted above) and codified in such works as Sir John Fortescue's *The Governance of England* (ca. 1460–70). This described the necessary expenditure that the king should make on buildings, hospitality, and "rich hangings and other apparel" without which a king lived, not according to his rank, but "rather in miserie and in more subgeccion than doth a private person."<sup>42</sup> As if following this prescription, Edward made large purchases from Pasquier Grenier in the late 1460s, including a four-piece set of the *Story of Nebuchadnezzar*, a nine-piece set of the *Story of Alexander*, and a six-piece *Passion* set, subjects that may have been duplicates of designs already supplied to the Burgundian court.<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, Henry VII followed a similar route following his accession in 1485. In September 1486 Pasquier and his son Jean were granted safe conduct and protection for themselves and their servants to import cloths of arras and tapestry to England. We can conjecture that a representative of the family traveled to England to present available designs, and that this resulted in a commission that came to fruition one and a half years later with the delivery by Jean of two tapestry altarcloths



Fig. 17. *The Constable of Richemont Paying the Clerics to Bury the Dead*. Drawing by Jean Gobert, 1621, of one of a lost set of 15th-century tapestries depicting the battle of Formigny. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

and an eleven-piece set of the *Story of the Trojan War*, of which Charles had received the *editio princeps* (first weaving) in 1472.<sup>44</sup> Descriptions of Henry's palaces at Richmond on the occasion of the marriage of his son Arthur, prince of Wales, to Catherine of Aragon in 1501 suggest that he had also acquired other sets from Grenier, depicting a variety of romance and "historical" subjects. Of especial interest are two large, gold-woven tapestries that are recorded in later royal inventories. One represented *Henry's Defeat of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth*, while the other showed a royal marriage, probably that of Henry and Elizabeth of York, the union that had finally resolved the Wars of the Roses in England.<sup>45</sup> Whether or not these tapestries were woven by Grenier, they show that Henry was just as aware of the potential of tapestry as a tool of propaganda as were his Continental counterparts. Fragments of armorial tapestries woven for his son Arthur also survive in Winchester Cathedral.<sup>46</sup>

The French court and nobility were equally keen on tapestry. With the gradual expulsion of the English from northern France during the 1440s and the decisive defeat of the English army at the battle of Formigny in 1450, Charles VII regained control of their northern territories. The victory over the English (of whom 4,000 were killed) was commemorated in a six-piece set of tapestries possibly after designs by Jean Fouquet. Long since lost, the appearance of two sections, one depicting the constable of Richemont ordering of the burial of the dead (fig. 17), is recorded in two seventeenth-century drawings.<sup>47</sup> An impression of the splendor of Charles VII's court is provided by an illumination of the king sitting in judgment at the trial of the duke of Alençon in 1458 surrounded by tapestries depicting heraldic beasts and coats of arms (fig. 18).<sup>48</sup> This set has also disappeared, but a fragment from another armorial ensemble with stags holding Charles's banners and insignia does survive.<sup>49</sup> Descriptions of court festivals and triumphal entries during the reigns of Louis XI, Charles VIII, and Louis XII demonstrate that the medium played an important part in court spectacle during the second half of the fifteenth century, while the subjects of the tapestries involved suggest the extent to which the French royal collection was similar in content and appearance to the Burgundian ducal and English royal collections.<sup>50</sup> For example, when Philip the Handsome visited Blois in 1501, the main rooms of the château were hung with scenes from the *Story of the Trojan War*, while the duke's apartments were hung with scenes of the *Story of Alexander*. The king's dining room was hung with the *Battle of Formigny*. These heroic subjects were in contrast to the decorations of the chambers of the queen and her ladies. Those of Claude, daughter of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany (subsequently wife of Francis I), were hung with "bucolic scenes with small figures and inscriptions"; the queen's chambers were hung with tapestry "depicting wild beasts and exotic natives."<sup>51</sup>

The Spanish kings had long been patrons of the Netherlandish industry. Martin, king of Aragon (r. 1395–1410), had received tapestries as a gift from Philip the Bold, and the inventory of his goods taken in 1410 lists other pieces that he must have purchased. Subsequent Spanish kings were equally enthusiastic about the medium, placing orders through Spanish merchants. In the course of their long reigns, the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand V (1452–1516), king of Aragon and Castile, and Isabella (1451–1504), queen of Castile and Aragon, amassed a sizable number of tapestries, partly through gifts, but primarily through purchases and commissions placed with merchants, such as Matías de Guirra, at the annual fairs held in Medina del Campo. By the time she died in 1504, Isabella's collection numbered 370 tapestries, which, according to current Spanish custom, were mostly sold in the town of Toro in 1505.<sup>52</sup>





Fig. 18. *The Trial of Jean, Duke of Alençon*. Miniature painting attributed to Jean Fouquet, in Laurent Girard's French edition of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*, 1458. 34 x 28 cm (miniature). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (Cod. gall. 6, fol. 2v)



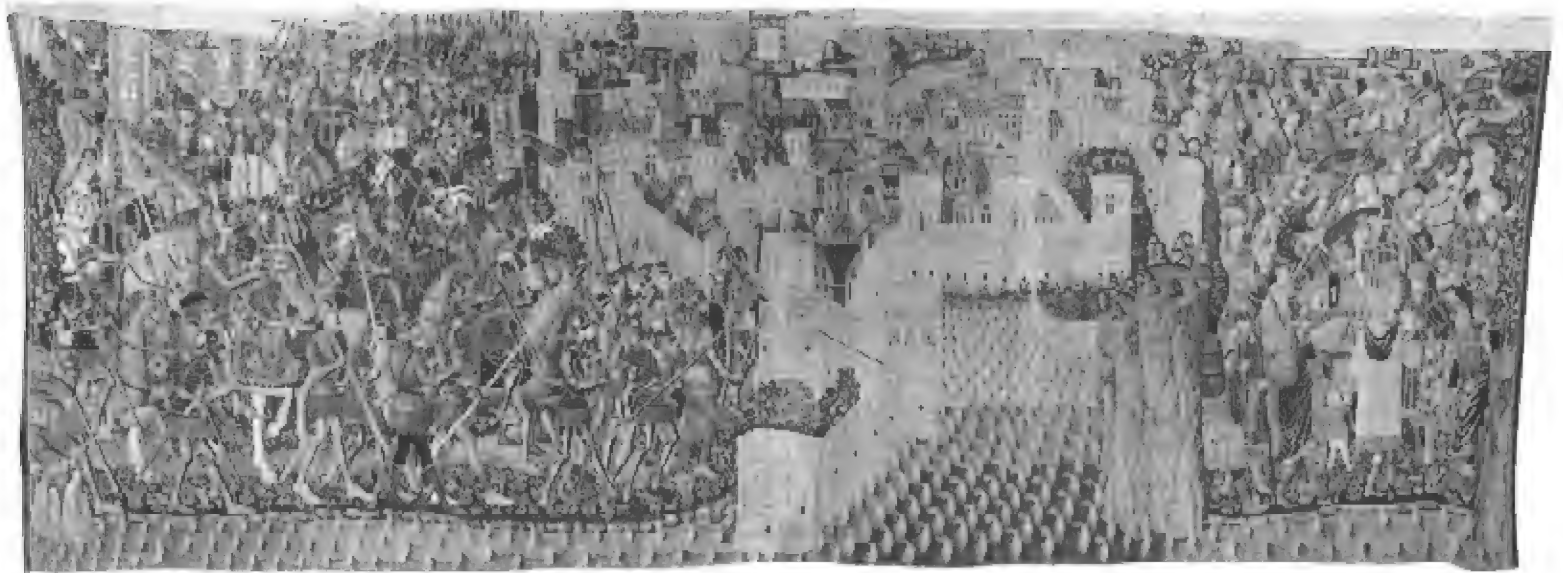


Fig. 19. *The Capture of Arzila and Tangier from the Expedition of the Portuguese in North Africa*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, probably Tournai, ca. 1473. Wool and silk, 400 x 1110 cm. Iglesia Colegiata, Pastrana

The Portuguese kings and nobility were equally keen tapestry patrons. One of the most notable commissions of the 1480s was the set of the *Expedition of the Portuguese in North Africa*, commemorating the campaign that the king of Portugal, Afonso V, led in North Africa in 1471 (fig. 19).<sup>53</sup>

Stimulated by the example of the Burgundian dukes and the European kings, the leading nobility were also important patrons of the workshops in the Low Countries. For example, Charles de Bourbon, cousin and brother-in-law of Charles the Bold, and archbishop of Lyon from 1444, appears to be typical of the grander magnates, evidently acquiring tapestries from a range of sources. As abbot of Saint Vaast, he purchased a set of the *Story of Godefroy de Bouillon* in Arras in 1469, and the same year he purchased other tapestries from Camus Dugardin of Lille.<sup>54</sup> He later made other purchases in Bruges. Although none of these survive (or can be identified with certainty), a fragment with the *Story of Hercules* with his arms in the upper field survives (Mobilier National, Paris). Dating after 1476, this set can be partly reconstructed from other extant fragments.<sup>55</sup> Bourbon's arms also appear on two high-quality altar frontals, an *Adoration* (cat. no. 6) and a *Coronation of the Virgin* (Musées de Sens), and on a drawing of a lost armorial tapestry featuring in the center a woman with a unicorn resting its head on her lap.<sup>56</sup> Although the place of manufacture of all these tapestries is unknown, the fragments demonstrate the eclectic nature of contemporary tapestry collections. Whereas the design of the *Hercules* set is typical of the two-dimensional, decorative style that characterized the products of the large narrative tapestries supplied by the Greniers, that of the *Unicorn* tapestry is close to that of a group generally thought to have been designed by Parisian artists during the 1480s and 1490s,

while the design of the altar frontals, particularly the *Adoration*, is in a style that has been linked with contemporary Brussels artists.

Another important courtier patron was Cardinal Ferry de Clugny (d. 1483), chancellor of the Order of the Garter (1473), bishop of Tournai (1474), member of Charles the Bold's Grand Council, and subsequently councillor to Mary of Burgundy. Forced to quit Tournai following the French invasion in 1477, Clugny lived in exile in Bruges and Brussels before traveling to Rome. In June 1483 his Ghent agent paid the Brussels tapissier Gielis van de Putte for an altar tapestry and paid a Paul de Porta to transport it from Brussels to Antwerp, where it was handed over to Alexandre Mousqueron who took it to Rome. Like Charles de Bourbon, Clugny's taste evidently embraced secular and mythological subjects, as demonstrated by fragments of a fine set of the *Illustrious Women* with his armorials, which dates from about 1480 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).<sup>57</sup>

#### USAGE

In the turbulent times of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, only the royal and most powerful aristocratic families were able to amass sizable tapestry collections through inheritance, purchase, and expropriation. Precious textiles represented an enormous investment, and the households of the rich were structured to ensure their care just as surely as they guarded the safety of other precious objects. From the early medieval period, these collections were consigned to the charge of designated wardrobe officers—also responsible for the upkeep and arrangement of all the soft furnishings in the household—generally at the residence in which they were stored but also, in the cases of the largest royal



and ducal collections, in centralized depots. For example, the Burgundian collection was divided among residences in Dijon, Lille, and Bruges during the 1420s, but in 1430 Philip the Bold rebuilt part of the Hôtel d'Ablainseville in Arras as a tapestry storeroom, with stone ceilings rather than wooden ones as a precaution against fire.<sup>58</sup> The principal wardrobe officers were senior figures in the hierarchy of the great households, and they generally held their office for life. They were responsible by indenture for the well-being and safety of the collection, which explains the meticulous care with which even small damages and repairs were often recorded in contemporary inventories.<sup>59</sup> In some cases, these officers were also closely involved in the purchase and supervision of tapestry commissions. For example, Jean Aubrey, Philip the Good's chief guardian at Arras, was directly involved in overseeing the execution of sets such as the *Story of Gideon*.<sup>60</sup>

The courts of the day were constantly on the move, and the officers of these ducal and royal wardrobes were responsible for providing their lords and leading members of the court with appropriate furnishings, no matter where they were. At the greater palaces, furnishings were on hand in standing wardrobes, but in lesser residences, or in the courtier and religious houses in which the king stayed when on progress, this was often not the case, and the king and other members of the royal family were therefore equipped with personal Removing Wardrobes, composed of suites of tapestry and furniture that could be set up as they traveled around the country.<sup>61</sup> At the English court, the household ordinances drawn up for Edward IV in 1471–72 (known as the Black Book) stipulated that the wardrobe officers were required to ensure the timely dispatch of the necessary furnishings in advance of the royal party as it traveled from one location to another. Once the destination was reached, the Black Book instructed them to “make fyres to sett up tressyls and bourdes, with yeomen of the chamber, and to helpe dresse the beddes of sylke and arras uppon the ushers appoyntment . . . [and] to help hang the cloathes and to kepe them clene from dogges and other uncleannes.”<sup>62</sup> Despite the storage of the finest pieces in canvas bags, it is clear that the constant movement and rehangings of the tapestries had a destructive effect. The English court therefore had a team of workers under the direction of a master weaver known as the “royal arras maker” whose job was to apply linings to the tapestries, to clean them, to repair damaged areas, and to weave armorial borders for addition as necessary. Similar operations are recorded in accounts relating to the households of the dukes of Burgundy and the kings of France, with smaller versions of the same in force in many of the noble households of the day.<sup>63</sup>

While the private apartments and reception rooms of the greater kings and nobles were presumably always hung with tapestries of

good quality, the finest and largest pieces were generally kept in storage and hung only for special occasions. The activity of the wardrobe departments was increasingly formalized during the fifteenth century, as attested by various household books prepared both in England and on the Continent. For example, the household ordinances drawn up under the direction of Henry VII's wife, Elizabeth of York, during the 1490s record the arrangements that were to be made for various formal occasions such as royal births, baptisms, and other ceremonial events. Inevitably, rich tapestry and cloth of gold are stipulated as the essential staging for any important ceremony. On such occasions there is ample evidence that in the palaces of the very rich, the hangings were hung according to their quality so as to dramatize the hierarchy of the audience chambers, the finest hangings being reserved, of course, for the most significant rooms. The logical conclusion to such a progression was a room hung entirely with cloth of gold and gold-embroidered heraldic devices.<sup>64</sup>

To facilitate the use of the tapestries, the inventories of the collections of the great magnates made clear distinctions between tapestries of different quality and purpose. Early inventories frequently distinguish among wall hangings, chamber hangings (suites including furniture and bed hangings as well as wall hangings), and chapel hangings. Although tapestry chambers became less common from the late fifteenth century, later inventories continue to distinguish between decorative verdure suites, figurative suites, and high-quality figurative suites. The inclusion of “gold” thread is always noted when it was present in the greater collections, as was the presence of silk in more modest collections. The care with which such distinctions were made reflects the enormous financial implications they embodied (degrees of value to which we are often insensitive today). It is important to remember that the vast majority of tapestries in quotidian use during the late fourteenth, fifteenth, and first half of the sixteenth centuries were relatively coarse tapestries woven in wool alone. The survival of a disproportionately large number of pieces with a high silk content is a reflection of the wear and tear that tapestries in regular use suffered, and a testament to the care with which finer pieces were traditionally treated well into the eighteenth century.

For the greatest court ceremonies and occasions, tapestries would also be hung in public spaces outside the royal palace. Descriptions of the joyful entries of the Burgundian dukes, the French kings, and the Habsburg emperor whenever they visited a city that they had not been to in a while reflect similar usage. It was in such public arenas that the enormous medieval and Renaissance sets really came into their own, where they could be seen and appreciated as a complete ensemble.

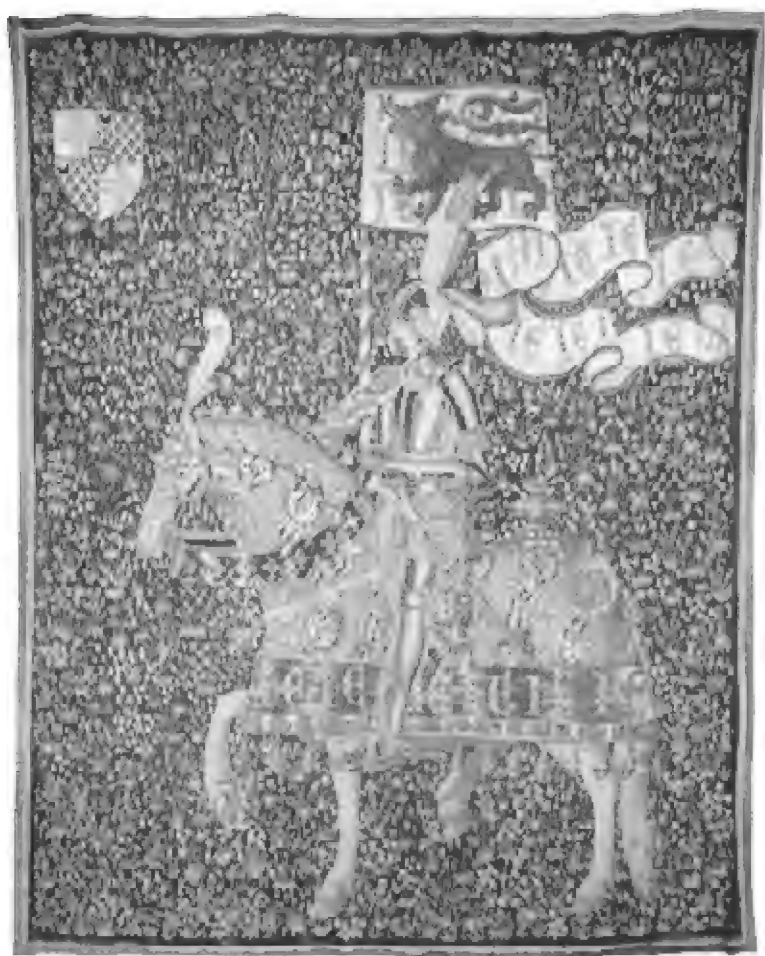


Fig. 20. *Millefleurs with Knight and Arms of Jean de Daillon*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Guillaume Desremaux, Tournai, ca. 1480. Wool and silk, 360 x 280 cm. Montacute House, Somerset

## SUBJECT MATTER

Contemporary inventories and accounts demonstrate that if the quality of a set of tapestries was one major factor that determined how they were hung, an equally important consideration was the subject matter.<sup>65</sup> The vast majority of tapestries in quotidian use, particularly in more private and intimate settings, were decorative tapestries with schematic foliage designs, known then as *verdures* and now often described as *millefleurs*. Featuring repeating patterns of flowers and plants, enlivened with animals and figures in more elaborate pieces, these were easy to produce and thus relatively cheap because the simple forms required less skill on the part of the weavers than complex pictorial designs. (Not all *millefleurs* and armorial tapestries were coarse. Many high-quality sets of these types were also produced from fine designs and materials.) Closely allied to the taste for *millefleurs* tapestries was the popularity of designs representing genre, hunting, and bucolic scenes. Some of these were portrayed on *millefleurs* grounds, while more elaborate, and thus more expensive, designs featured landscape grounds. Again, these were produced in a wide range of

qualities, from the large volume of cheap, coarse sets made for ready sale in the marketplace to high-quality designs with allegorical subtexts woven as custom commissions.

While one needs to be cautious in making sweeping generalizations about the role of subject matter—exceptions to the rule inevitably abound—decorative, genre, and hunting tapestries were typically used in private and intimate settings. It was in the more public rooms of the great palaces and households that the elaborate figurative and narrative sets were displayed. In this context the underlying motivation was not personal, with the patron commissioning a design that appealed to him for reasons of individual taste and interest, but demonstrative—the patron paraded role models and concepts with which he or she wished to be allied.

As we have seen, the richest patrons of the day could commission sets with overtly propagandistic subject matter. At the cheaper end of the spectrum, armorial and heraldic hangings were produced in large quantities and in qualities that ranged from simple patterns to artistic designs with complex symbolic and allegorical components. An idea of the character of these commissions is provided by tapestries depicting the heraldic devices of the French military commander Jean de Daillon, woven in Tournai between 1479 and 1481 (fig. 20), and another bearing the arms of the English Lord Treasurer, John, Lord Dynham, woven between 1488 and 1501.<sup>66</sup> On a grander scale, the greatest patrons of the day also commissioned explicitly propagandistic sequences, such as the Burgundian commissions for the *Battle of Roosebeke*, the *Battle of Liège*, and the *Story of Gideon*; the French *Jousts of Saint Denis* and *Battle of Formigny*; the Portuguese *Expedition of the Portuguese in North Africa*; and the Rhodes *Siege of Rhodes by the Turks* (the last probably commissioned by Eméri d'Amboise, the Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John between 1503 and 1512). But if these commissions demonstrate the vitality of the propagandistic use of tapestry, their cost was high. The vast majority of medieval and Renaissance production was based on designs that were initiated by weavers and merchants as speculative commissions, intended for sale at annual fairs in centers such as Bruges, Bergen op Zoom, and Antwerp.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that most themes were of a type that would appeal to a broad range of patrons (and could be customized by the inclusion of portraits or the addition of armorial borders). Exemplary subjects from biblical, historical, and mythological sources were especially popular, as epitomized by series of the *Nine Worthies*, which combined three heroes from pagan antiquity—Hector, Alexander, and Caesar—with three biblical heroes—David, Joshua, and Judas Maccabeus—and three Christian heroes—King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godefroy de



Bouillon. The subject was represented in many sets of cartoons from the late fourteenth until well into the sixteenth century. One of the earliest examples, dating from about 1385 and possibly made for the duke of Berry, survives in part at The Cloisters.<sup>67</sup>

Like the Worthies, many other figures from classical history and medieval mythology provided resonant role models for medieval and Renaissance patrons. The production of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century is characterized by a predilection for subjects representing feats of arms drawn from contemporary chivalric romances and histories, featuring heroes such as Percival, Charlemagne, Renaud de Montauban, Doon de Mayence, and Don de la Roche.<sup>68</sup> An idea of the appearance of such series is provided by the fragmentary scene from the *Story of Jourdain de Blaye*, about 1380–1400 (fig. 36); the battle scene portrayed in the background of the *Très riches heures* of the duke of Berry; and a fragment from a *Story of Charlemagne*, woven about 1450 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London).<sup>69</sup> From the early to mid-fifteenth century, these subjects were increasingly supplemented, and then displaced, by heroes drawn from classical history and mythology. Hercules was especially favored, his combination of bravery, heroic action, and erudition making him the perfect model of *virtus heroica*. His attainment of immortality through relentless effort led to his identification with the Christian virtue of Fortitude, while his Labors were susceptible to interpretation as a metaphor of Christ's suffering for mankind. Quite apart from the susceptibility of classical heroes to a medieval interpretation of their achievements in terms of chivalric ideals, contemporary interest in these figures was further stimulated by humanism spreading to northern Europe, bringing with it a growing awareness of the classical world. Many dynasties sought to trace their ancestry to such classical heroes as Brutus, Romulus, and Remus, and these and other figures became increasingly popular subjects in tapestry design from the 1460s and 1470s.

As tapestry historians have long recognized, these fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century "classical" narratives were based on medieval romance versions, rather than the original Greek and Latin texts.<sup>70</sup> The literary milieu of Philip the Good's court seems to have exerted an important influence over this development. Like his grandfather and great-uncles, Philip the Good was a great bibliophile, commissioning many illuminated manuscripts and prose translations of these medieval "classical" texts for his enormous library, which expanded during his reign from some two hundred volumes to more than one thousand.<sup>71</sup> For example, Jean Wauquelin's *Le livre des conquestes et faits d'Alexandre*, written for Philip before 1440, seems to have been one of the principal sources for the narrative of the *Story of Alexander* design series of which two pieces survive in Rome (Galleria Doria Pamphilj), possibly

duplicates of the set acquired by Philip from Pasquier Grenier in 1459.<sup>72</sup> The *Story of the Trojan War* series delivered to Charles the Bold in 1472 was based, not on the *Iliad*, but on medieval versions such as the verse *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure (1184) and the prose *Historia destructionis Troiae* by Guido delle Colonne (1287). Philip the Good's library contained seventeen manuscripts of the *Roman de Troie*, while his chaplain, Raoul Lefèvre, compiled these texts into the *Recueil des histoires de Troie* in 1464.<sup>73</sup> The translation of these classical sources via medieval verse romance was matched by the way in which they were visualized, with the figures generally represented in contemporary medieval costume or a very stylized notion of classical dress. It was not until the 1520s and 1530s, when northern artists were exposed to the influence of Italianate designs, particularly those of Raphael and Giulio Romano—steeped as they were in the classical models available in Rome—that Netherlandish tapestry designs began to attempt to render classical costumes and architecture with any precision.

If the classical heroes provided attractive models for medieval rulers and nobility, the Old Testament patriarchs and heroes of the Apocrypha also provided resonant types. Abraham and David were especially appealing in an age of kings because they were divinely sanctioned as the chosen rulers of their people, and both passed on this privilege to their sons (a particularly meaningful comparison in an age when so many rulers acquired and held their seats by force of arms). The popularity of David is demonstrated by the existence of more than twenty distinct design series woven between 1480 and 1530, surviving in complete and fragmentary sets. For women, Esther and Judith provided attractive models, and again, fragments of numerous design series of these subjects attest to their contemporary popularity.<sup>74</sup>

The predominantly religious orientation of the medieval era can be seen in the predilection for subjects relating to religious mythology. For example, the so-called *Legend of the True Cross*, of which a set dating from about 1460 survives at Saragossa (cathedral museum), represents the story of the theft of the True Cross based on Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*. Another popular theme, which was elaborated in at least three different design series between 1470 and 1510, featured the Jewish Wars against the Romans, first recorded by Flavius Josephus and then popularized in an epic poem of the twelfth century known as *La vengeance de nostre seigneur*. The *Creed* also provided the basis for several design series in the late fifteenth century, featuring figures from the Old and the New Testament. According to medieval typology, the former were seen as prefigurations of the latter, a typology that was inspired (sometimes also visually) by the *Bible des pauvres* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*.<sup>75</sup>



Fig. 21. Interior view of the abbey church of Saint-Robert in La Chaise-Dieu, showing the set of tapestries donated in 1518 by the abbot Jacques de Saint-Nectaire

Most major collections included sets for use in chapels and for personal devotion, and fifteenth-century inventories invariably list scenes of the Life of Christ, of the Virgin, or of the patron saints of the owner. With the development of the cult of the Precious Blood and the taste for increasingly graphic representations of Christ's suffering in the late fifteenth century, there also appears to have been a growing market for high-quality Passion scenes, or scenes from the Life of Christ and of the Virgin laden with Passion iconography.<sup>76</sup> A number of such pieces are listed in documentation relating to the papal tapestry collections, and Isabella the Catholic and her daughter, Joanna of Castile (1479–1555), both had large collections of such tapestries. From about 1500, inventories of many of the great households mention similar pieces in use as altarpieces and antependiums.

If overtly religious subject matter provided one manifestation of the predominant worldview of the late medieval era, a further demonstration of this mentality was the taste for moralizing and allegorical subject matter. The battle of the Vices and Virtues over man's soul found numerous interpretations, whether in sets of the *Seven Deadly Sins*, the *Psychomachy*, or more abstruse subjects.<sup>77</sup> One of the largest and most elaborate design series of this genre was conceived in the early 1500s. Comprising ten pieces and commonly now known as the *Redemption of Man*, this featured a complex intermingling of the stories of the Fall and Redemption of Man and the battle of the Vices and Virtues for man's soul, in a narrative sequence whose character and complexity were close to those of contemporary miracle play cycles. Fragments from more than ten sets of this design are extant.<sup>78</sup> Of course, not all subject matter was strictly exemplary or moralistic (although this tended

to be the underlying tone well into the sixteenth century). Numerous series reflected the perennial fascination with the human condition, such as sets depicting the well-known allegorical *Romance of the Rose*, others, the Ages of Man, the Humors, and the like.

While the chivalric, allegorical, and exemplary themes of the fifteenth century continued to be produced well into the sixteenth, they were increasingly supplemented by a wealth of new figures from classical literature. One of the inspirations for this development were the sets depicting scenes based on Petrarch's poem *I trionfi*. This subject first appears to have been reproduced in tapestry for Philip the Bold in 1399, and subsequently Pierre de Los wove a set of *Triumphs* for the Medici in the 1450s. The subject found renewed interest among Northern patrons from about 1500. Isabella the Catholic acquired a six-piece set in 1504, and an even more elaborate design series was conceived in about 1507–10 (see cat. no. 13) of which weavings were acquired by Henry VIII, Louis XII, and Cardinal Wolsey, among others. Depicting the successive triumphs of Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time, and Religion, the theme provided a framework for contemporary humanists and designers to display an eclectic mix of religious, historical, and mythological personages. Many of these figures, such as Jason and Perseus, subsequently became the subject of design series in their own right during the 1510s.<sup>79</sup>

#### CHURCH PATRONAGE

Finally, the church formed another important sphere of patronage. There tapestry also constituted a central part of the theatrical and decorative trappings of the greater establishments. As Delmarcel has noted, this is hardly surprising because many of the leading figures of the church were members of the European aristocracy and had been raised in circumstances in which tapestry was perceived as a manifestation of power. From the latter part of the fifteenth century, a tradition developed, particularly in certain areas of France, whereby ecclesiastics would donate precious tapestries to their benefices, either sumptuous altar panels and antependiums, or sets of tapestries depicting the Life of Christ, the Virgin, or the patron saints of the respective churches. Generally speaking, these sumptuous sets were reserved for use on religious feast days. For example, the cathedral church of Angers owned a six-piece set of the *Story of Saint Maurice* (ordered in Paris, 1459) and a three-piece set of the *Story of Saint Maurille* (purchased in Paris, 1461) that were hung in the choir on feast days. During the rest of the year the choir was hung with the painted cloth cartoons from which the tapestries had been woven.<sup>80</sup>

At least twenty late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century choir sets survive in whole or in part, mostly in France (see fig. 21). One of



the earliest extant examples is the *Story of Saint Peter* woven about 1460 for Guillaume de Hellande, bishop of Beauvais, of which various fragments are extant.<sup>81</sup> The place of manufacture of these sets is generally unknown, but the number that survive or are documented suggests the relative ease with which French ecclesiastics and institutions were able to commission custom designs, probably from a variety of Netherlandish centers. The subject matter of these sets is generally derived from Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*.

One of the most splendid examples of this choir tapestry genre is the *Story of Saint Stephen*, commissioned by Bishop Jean Baillet, about 1500–1505, for the cathedral of Auxerre (fig. 35).<sup>82</sup>

1. For general introductions to medieval and early Renaissance tapestry patronage, see Cavallo 1993, pp. 26–80; Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 9–75; and Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 25–85.
2. Göbel 1923 and Göbel 1928 cite many early inventories and documents.
3. Joubert 1981.
4. Jubinal 1840, pp. 25–28; Labarte 1879, pp. 62–66.
5. Ledos 1889; Joubert 1981.
6. De Winter 1976, pp. 134–59.
7. Prost 1889–90; Guiffrey 1894–96, vol. 2, pp. 206–24.
8. Lestocquoy 1978, passim; Joubert 1990b.
9. Joubert 1990b, p. 602.
10. Caillieteau et al. 1987.
11. Caillieteau in *ibid.*, p. 32.
12. De Winter 1976, pp. 134–59; Joubert 1990b.
13. For the context of these gifts, see Vaughan 1962.
14. Dehaisnes 1886, vol. 2, pp. 651, 668; De Winter 1976, p. 157.
15. De Winter 1976, p. 157.
16. Dehaisnes 1886, vol. 2, p. 778; De Winter 1976, p. 151; De Winter 1985, p. 24; Joubert 1990b, p. 602.
17. De Winter 1976, p. 152; Brassat 1992, p. 164.
18. Pinchart 1878–85, p. 11.
19. De Winter 1976, pp. 151–55.
20. Meiss 1974, pp. 63–64; McKendrick 1991, p. 67, n. 163.
21. Pinchart 1878–85, p. 19.
22. Brassat 1992, p. 164.
23. Guiffrey 1878–85, pp. 15–16.
24. Guiffrey 1887.
25. McKendrick 1995, pp. 48–50; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 32–41.
26. Guiffrey 1887; Stratford 1993, pp. 86–89.
27. Stratford 1993, p. 89.
28. W. G. Thomson 1973, p. 83; McKendrick 1995, p. 51.
29. J. C. Smith 1979, pp. 332–46; J. C. Smith 1989.
30. J. C. Smith 1979; J. C. Smith 1989; Ainsworth in New York 1998, p. 24.
31. Laborde 1849–52, vol. 2, pp. 267–75; J. C. Smith 1979, p. 334.
32. Vaughan 1970, p. 206; J. C. Smith 1979, pp. 335–36.
33. J. C. Smith 1989.
34. Chastellain 1863–66, vol. 4, pp. 93–94.
35. J. C. Smith 1989, p. 125.
36. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 71–80; McKendrick in Grove 1996, vol. 13, p. 634.
37. McKendrick 1987, p. 522, n. 17; Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer 1998; Franke 1998.
38. Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, p. 166; Deuchler 1984.
39. Pinchart 1878–85, p. 67.
40. McKendrick 1991.
41. Bern 1969.

Once again, the place of manufacture of this and other related sets is unknown, although the style of the figures has led to suggestions that the designs may have been provided by the Brussels artist Colyn de Coter or an artist in his circle. Although such donations evidently occurred in other countries—for example, the set of the *Life of Christ* which was donated to Canterbury Cathedral by the prior Thomas Goldstone and the almoner Richard Dering in 1511 (cathedral of Saint-Sauveur, Aix-en-Provence, and location unknown)—the vast majority of such documented commissions were made by French ecclesiastics to French churches, especially in Burgundy, Champagne, and Picardy.<sup>83</sup>

42. Fortescue 1885, p. 125; Thurley 1993, pp. 11–18.
43. McKendrick 1987.
44. McKendrick 1991, pp. 51–52.
45. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 65–68.
46. Tournai 1970, no. 5; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 64–65.
47. Paris 1981, pp. 35–38, nos. 11a–d; Brassat 1992, pp. 164–66.
48. Brassat 1992, pp. 68–69.
49. Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 21, 66.
50. Guiffrey 1878–85, pp. 66–69; Cavallo 1993, p. 29.
51. Guiffrey 1878–85, p. 67.
52. Sánchez Cantón 1950, pp. 89–150; Junquera de Vega 1970, pp. 16–17; Junquera 1985, pp. 22–25.
53. Tournai, Brussels, and Rijkhoven 1985, pp. 140–45.
54. Cavallo 1993, p. 67.
55. Tournai 1967, pp. 20–21.
56. Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 166–68; Freeman 1976, p. 53.
57. Cavallo 1967, pp. 56–61.
58. J. C. Smith 1979, p. 343.
59. For example, for the English royal collection, see McKendrick 1995, pp. 47, 55–56, n. 33; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 54–57, 106–19.
60. J. C. Smith 1979, p. 344.
61. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 54–56; J. C. Smith 1979, pp. 342–43.
62. Thurley 1993, p. 74.
63. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 55–57; J. C. Smith 1979, pp. 343–44.
64. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 58–61, 85–87, 129–30, 200–205.
65. Roblot-Delondre 1917–19; Göbel 1923, pp. 55–99; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 30–44.
66. Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 122–26; Cavallo 1993, pp. 272–77.
67. Cavallo 1993, pp. 94–124.
68. Göbel 1923, pp. 58–65; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 134–37.
69. Turin 1952, pp. 14–15; Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 18–19.
70. McKendrick 1988; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 36–38.
71. Brussels 1967.
72. Mechelen 2000, p. 39.
73. McKendrick 1991, p. 43; Mechelen 2000, p. 36.
74. Franke 1998; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 60.
75. Cavallo 1993, pp. 33–34.
76. Wardwell 1975; Cavallo 1993, pp. 334–46.
77. Delmarcel in Mechelen 2000, pp. 24–27.
78. Cavallo 1993, pp. 421–45.
79. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 78, 82.
80. Cavallo 1993, p. 31.
81. Cavallo 1967, pp. 52–54.
82. Joubert 1987b.
83. Aix-en-Provence 1977.



Vint achilles deue et enragé . Sus trauillis qui grans colusions -  
Faisoit des grés pour e estre uéne . Dux maruillons les grés conclusions  
Dunt ce jour ueussent interuions . Qua trauillis e deuie e grant trespas  
Son heaume casse de horions . Vint achilles qui luy cossa la tete .

Entre les piez des cheuaux et haut chet Vult  
Le noble corps par multitraxeur melucluel - Ma  
Fuy merrom sire achilles - trapps - Dont les tro  
Soulr bailliace que ce roya trouua - fectouu



Quat bodaz koulbus inditus. Vascu greens achilles in sterut.

De me eme tranthys trahit. Egra cu



# Merchants and Weavers in Northern Europe, 1380-1480

Archaeological evidence demonstrates that tapestry was being woven in pharaonic Egypt at least fifteen hundred years before the modern era. Literary descriptions and vase paintings suggest that it was also widely produced in the classical world, while large numbers of fragmentary tapestries (many made as clothing adornments, but some from larger wall hangings) show the ubiquity of production in the Eastern Mediterranean basin in the early postclassical era.<sup>1</sup> The climatic conditions have been favorable to the survival of textiles in these regions, but, by extension, it seems reasonable to assume that a similar production existed farther north during this era and that the paucity of examples is largely to be explained by the fragile nature of the medium in inclement conditions. A small number of extant tapestries certainly attests to production from the twelfth century both in Sicily and in Hispanic and Germanic centers, and the size and sophistication of these pieces suggest that they were the products of a well-established, albeit dispersed and fragmented, industry.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the terminology with which textiles are described in early medieval inventories is vague and cannot serve as the basis for conclusions about the antecedents of the medieval European tapestry industry.<sup>3</sup>

From the early fourteenth century comes evidence of a more definable production in northern Europe and in the Germanic and Swiss cantons along the Rhine. In the latter, production appears to have been artisanal and itinerant: weavers moved from one workshop to another (many workshops were attached to convents and monasteries), producing small-scale tapestries, often on one-person looms, from designs by local artists. Germanic and Swiss production followed this pattern well into the early sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Although a similar mode of production may have existed elsewhere in central and northern Europe in the early medieval era, a much larger and semi-industrialized production supplanted it in northern France and the Netherlands during the fourteenth century. Several circumstances stimulated and nurtured this development.

It is fairly certain that weavers were active in northern France and the Netherlands by the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

A document of 1303 records a dispute in Paris between a fraternity of “tapissiers sarazinoise” (makers, presumably, of a woven pile fabric, akin to the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century knotted, figurative panels that survive in Halberstadt Cathedral) and a fraternity of “tappicciars que l’on appelle ouvriers en la haute lisse,” a tentative phrasing that, if it was a reference to high-loom tapestry weavers, may imply the newness of the métier in this center. A second document concerns the purchase by the countess Mahaut of Artois and Burgundy (1302–1329) of “dras ouvrés en haute lisse” from an Arras merchant in 1313.<sup>6</sup> During the following decades increasing documentary references to “tapissiers” and “haute lisse” weavers, combined with growing numbers of tapestry ensembles cited in contemporary inventories, point to an expanding production in northern France and the Low Countries—though the terminology is still imprecise (for example, while in some contexts haute lisse appears to have been used to designate tapestry, in others it evidently refers to high-quality woven cloth).<sup>7</sup> Much of this activity seems to have been concentrated in Paris and Arras, though tapissiers are also mentioned from early in the fourteenth century in centers such as Brussels, Lille, and Tournai. The majority of products featured repeating heraldic and decorative motifs; there was a smaller quantity of figurative hangings.<sup>8</sup>

The character of the industry changed dramatically during the second half of the fourteenth century under the patronage of the Valois princes, particularly Louis of Anjou and Philip the Bold. Most of their acquisitions were made through a relatively small number of merchants, particularly Nicolas Bataille (fl. 1363–1408), Jacques Dourdin (fl. 1385–1407), and Pierre de Beaumetz (fl. 1383–1418)—all of Paris—and Jean Cosset (fl. 1384–1401) of Arras.<sup>9</sup> Misidentified by early twentieth-century historians as weavers, these men were first and foremost rich merchants; several of them were also involved in the trade of other commodities, such as wine. They acted as middlemen between the royal patrons and the tapestry workshops, establishing contracts, monitoring progress, and, most important, providing financial advances for material and labor. The status that the merchants enjoyed at the Valois





Paris to Arras after 1384, when Philip the Bold acquired the territories of Flanders and Artois following the death of Louis II de Male (Philip had married Louis's daughter, Margaret, in 1369). Philip had shown an interest in the Arras industry in 1371, when he remunerated various weavers whose workshops he had visited there.<sup>15</sup> After 1384, Philip stayed often at the ducal residence in Arras and at the castle of Hesdin (about twenty kilometers northwest of the town); he prized these dwellings for their location approximately in the center of his domains, and from the 1390s Arras was the duchess's principal home. Although Philip continued to buy from Parisian workshops, he also made regular, large purchases from Arras merchants of tapestries both for himself and for use as diplomatic gifts.<sup>16</sup> His chief source was Cosset, who supplied him with a set of tapestries, many woven with gold, every year between 1385 and 1402.<sup>17</sup>

The Arras tapestry industry grew as the once-prosperous local wool trade declined in the face of competition from England, which was now exporting high-quality cloth rather than just material for it.<sup>18</sup> The cloth trade had involved many of the requisites for tapestry production—capitalization, skilled weavers, and a secondary industry of dyers and suppliers of raw materials. It seems probable, therefore, that the rise of the tapestry industry in the Burgundian territories resulted in part from the transfer of skilled labor from one *métier* to the other, with Philip the Bold's encouragement. The volume of orders that Philip placed during the 1380s and 1390s suggests an intention to promote the local industry, and sizable workshops evidently developed in Arras during these decades. Contemporary documents frequently refer to tapestries woven in “fin fil d'Arras,” in contrast to others said to be made in the “gros fil” or “fil délye” of Paris. Although these terms were often used generically and offer no solid evidence of a tapestry's place of manufacture, it is clear that from the late fourteenth century Arras was renowned for the quality of its products and that many of the finest incorporated gold thread (the extensive use of such thread in figurative tapestry hangings may have been an Arras innovation).<sup>19</sup> From the 1390s most of the fine-quality tapestries purchased by the leading nobility appear to have been made in Arras (though the Paris merchants continued to play a major role in their trade and dissemination), and as these products were exported the name of the town became a synonym throughout Europe for a high-quality tapestry—for example, *arras* in England, *arazzo* in Italy, and *pañó de ras* in Spain.<sup>20</sup>

As the tapestry industry in Arras flourished, trade and production in Paris appear to have declined by the end of the first quarter of the century. It has usually been assumed that the industry was devastated by the occupation of Paris by the English in 1420, but the deaths of the key merchants Dourdin (in 1407), Bataille (in 1408),

and Beaumetz (ca. 1418) seem to have played an equally important part.<sup>21</sup> As Cavallo has noted, there is some evidence of production and trade in Paris during the later fifteenth century, but these transactions do not compare in status, value, or volume with those recorded in Arras, Tournai, and elsewhere in the same period.<sup>22</sup> While a moderate number of low- and medium-quality tapestries may have been produced in Paris through the end of the fifteenth century, there is little support in the extant documentation for the existence of large, high-quality workshops in the city.

The developing market for tapestry hangings among the European nobility evidently stimulated the establishment of tapestry workshops in several centers outside Paris and Arras during the late fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries. Inventory descriptions indicate that there may have been workshops producing heraldic tapestries in London in the 1380s and 1390s, and Sigismund, king of Hungary, appears to have taken some Arras weavers back to Budapest with him following his journey through France, Burgundy, and England in 1415–17.<sup>23</sup> Netherlandish weavers (many of them Arras natives) are recorded from the late fourteenth century in some of the leading Italian towns, and there was at least one atelier active in Avignon in the 1430s.<sup>24</sup> Few of these workshops seem to have lasted for long or to have grown to any size, however, presumably because they lacked the ingredients that had contributed to the development of the industry in Paris and Arras. A sizable tapestry industry did arise in the Low Countries, however, sustained by a broad spectrum of merchants and independent workshops. The increasing number of master weavers recorded in the principal Netherlandish towns and the founding of tapestry guilds in many of the leading centers of commerce and trade reflect this development. The character and distribution of the workshops remain subjects of debate, however. Scholars are largely dependent on contracts between rich patrons and merchants, and to a lesser extent on fragmentary guild documentation—records that tell only part of a much larger story. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries various archivists unearthed some, but not all, of this material. Their writings, often biased by nationalistic impulses, provided the foundation for a second generation of historians, who simplified and distorted the evolution of medieval tapestry production. According to this view, Paris emerged as a principal center of production during the last third of the fourteenth century, to be supplanted by Arras during the first half of the fifteenth century; Arras was displaced in turn by Tournai during the second half of the fifteenth century; and from the 1490s Brussels dominated production. More recent historians have challenged this model, demonstrating the extent to which it is both inaccurate—it assumed large-scale, high-quality production

in Paris during the late fourteenth century, for example, because it mistook the merchants who handled the trade for local weavers—and misleading: it masked the volume of trade and production in both these and other towns, such as Lille and Bruges, during the supposed ascendancy of one center or another.<sup>25</sup>

In a recent survey of the state of current knowledge Cavallo argued that the geography of production was more fluid than previously recognized. In support of his position he adduced the proximity of the principal centers of production to one another; the practice of prominent merchants from one town of trading tapestries produced in another center—often through depots or agents in yet a third town; weavers' mobility, both within the Low Countries and farther afield; and the occasional provision of cartoons for workshops in one center by artists from another. He concluded that medieval production was a "diverse activity [that] took place simultaneously in many different weaving centers and tapestry markets and that . . . transcended regional boundaries."<sup>26</sup>

Cavallo's reappraisal was a healthy challenge to the traditional view and is unquestionably relevant to the vast majority of medieval production, which, being of a mundane and mediocre character, could indeed have been produced more or less anywhere. His vision of a diversified and relatively undifferentiated production throughout the Low Countries does not apply entirely, however, to the part of the industry that produced large numbers of big, high-quality tapestries. Productions such as Philip the Good's *Gideon* tapestries or the *Story of the Trojan War* sets that Pasquier Grenier supplied to leading patrons between 1472 and 1493 were not the product of an ad hoc cottage industry. Even if one assumes that such commissions were customarily divided between two or three different ateliers, the production of these tapestries required sizable workshops with big looms, good management, a dependable workforce of highly skilled weavers, a demonstrated ability to produce in a timely and consistent fashion, and secure storage for valuable raw materials. Furthermore, while Cavallo is correct that rich merchants traded tapestries made in a variety of centers, those who specialized in tapestry production and commissioned new cartoons on speculation had considerable economic incentive to place commissions with workshops in their own vicinity: doing so allowed them to keep an eye both on production and on the valuable materials that they supplied. (That Bataille, Beaumetz, and Dourdin, who all resided in Paris, commissioned high-quality tapestries from Arras is probably to be explained by the rapidity with which the high-quality industry had developed in Arras during the 1380s and 1390s. Most of the major tapestry entrepreneurs of the fifteenth century appear to have lived close to the workshops that provided the majority of their

high-quality products.) Thus, while the traditional paradigm of the successive rise and fall of Paris, Arras, Tournai, and Brussels may be simplistic, certain weavers and merchants do appear to have played a significant role in production and trade at different points in the fifteenth century, and the fortunes of production in different centers were linked to the careers of these merchants. In the future a more nuanced reading of the available documentation, and a more careful contextualization of this information in the socioeconomic circumstances of the merchants and master weavers, may reveal more about the rise and fall of high-quality production in different centers.

The Arras workshops continued to play a major part in high-quality production through the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Visiting Arras in 1438, the Spanish traveler Pero Tafur described it as a very rich town, "especially by reason of its woven cloths and all kinds of tapestries, and although they are also made in other places, yet it well appears that those which are made in Arras have the preference."<sup>28</sup> Again, ducal patronage must have played a role in this esteem and prosperity. Just as the merchant Jean Cosset had enjoyed close links with Philip the Bold, Jean Walois (Jan, Jehan; fl. 1412–45, d. before 1452) became the leading supplier to John the Fearless and Philip the Good, Philip's son and grandson. Like Cosset, Walois was a member of one of the richest and most powerful families in Arras. He sold tapestries to the duke of Burgundy from 1413 until 1445, providing, among many others, the tapestries that Philip the Good presented to the delegates at the 1435 congress that established peace between Burgundy and France. Walois evidently owned a number of cartoons, including large hunting scenes that were enormously popular during the second quarter of the century, designs that probably resembled the four *Devonshire Hunts* (see fig. 24).<sup>29</sup>

The volume of trade passing through the hands of Arras-based merchants was steady until the mid-fifteenth century, when Tournai-based merchants and production gained favor. The reasons for this shift are unclear,<sup>30</sup> but the eclipse of the Arras workshops by those of Tournai may, in part, have been a consequence of the death of Jean Walois, whose relationship with Philip the Good had guaranteed the placement of many prestigious commissions with the former; after Walois's death Philip started placing substantial commissions with Tournai merchants and weavers. A certain amount of production is recorded in Arras until the late fifteenth century, but there was little activity after 1477, when the sack of the town by the French dealt a serious blow to the local economy.

Although Philip the Good had acquired the Hainaut region in 1423 and become count of Hainaut in 1433, Tournai had remained a French enclave within the Burgundian territory. In the early 1420s





Fig. 24. *Boar and Bear Hunt* from the *Devonshire Hunts*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, possibly Arras, ca. 1430. Wool, 407 x 1021 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Philip had granted it favorable trade terms (in return for annual payments), and during the 1430s and 1440s the town had prospered.<sup>31</sup> So had the tapestry industry: twenty-eight tapissiers are recorded in Tournai between 1350 and 1400, but by midcentury there were more than one hundred masters involved in the trade (of whom about seventy were described as “tapissiers,” and about forty as “marcheteurs”).<sup>32</sup> Since all would have been attended by journeymen and apprentices, these numbers indicate a sizable industry. The Tournai tapestry weavers and *hautelisseurs* (in this case, weavers of fine cloth) broke from the Mercers’ Guild in 1423 and formed their own association. In turn, the tapestry weavers eventually separated from the *hautelisseurs*, establishing their own guild in 1491.

In 1448 Philip the Good consigned the production of the costly *Gideon* set to two Tournai workshops, those of Robert Dary and Jehan (Jean) de l’Ortie. Philip’s contract with the master weavers stipulated that they were to obtain the cartoon from Bauduin de Bailleul or an equally competent artist and that the work was to be completed within four years. It also specified that where the cartoon was painted in yellow the weavers were to use Venetian gold thread, and where it was white they were to use Venetian silver thread; the rest of the tapestry was to be woven in well-dyed silk and *sayette* (a type of fine wool).<sup>33</sup> Philip agreed to provide the weavers with a considerable advance and to pay their expenses on an annual basis. It is unclear why he dealt directly with the weavers rather than with a merchant; he may have done so because of the recent death of Walois, or because a middleman was irrelevant in a commission in which Philip was so immediately involved. Besides its financial rewards, the commission must have had an

important impact on the reputation of local production and sent a signal to other potential patrons.

In the same year Dary and de l’Ortie were appointed as two of three Tournai representatives for the powerful Truye brothers, Arras-based merchants of high-quality textiles and tapestries. While little is known of Dary’s and de l’Ortie’s activity after 1448, the third of the Truye Tournai agents, Pasquier Grenier (fl. 1447–93), is well documented. Indeed, Grenier’s career provides remarkable insight into the character and importance of the tapestry trade of the day.<sup>34</sup>

A patrician of Tournai, Grenier was the principal wine importer to the town. The first mention of independent activity as a tapestry merchant dates from 1449, when as a *marcheteur* Grenier was selling tapestries through agents in Le Puy (in the Auvergne) and Lyon. In later transactions he utilized an agent in Reims.<sup>35</sup> He also had depots in Antwerp and Bruges, and from the late 1450s he was one of the principal suppliers to the Burgundian court. In 1459 he sold Philip the Good a chamber of tapestries of the *Story of Alexander*, comprising six wall hangings and matching bed furnishings. During the following years he supplied sets of the *Passion* and *Shepherds* (1461), the *Story of Esther and Ahasuerus*, and the *Story of the Swan Knight* (1462), and chambers of pastoral scenes and woodcutters (1466).<sup>36</sup> Grenier also provided the *Story of the Trojan War* purchased in 1472 by the town and franc of Bruges as a gift for Charles the Bold. The circumstances in which these design series were conceived are undocumented, but it seems almost certain that, like the great late fourteenth-century merchants, Grenier actively commissioned new cartoons that he hoped would appeal to the great patrons of his day.

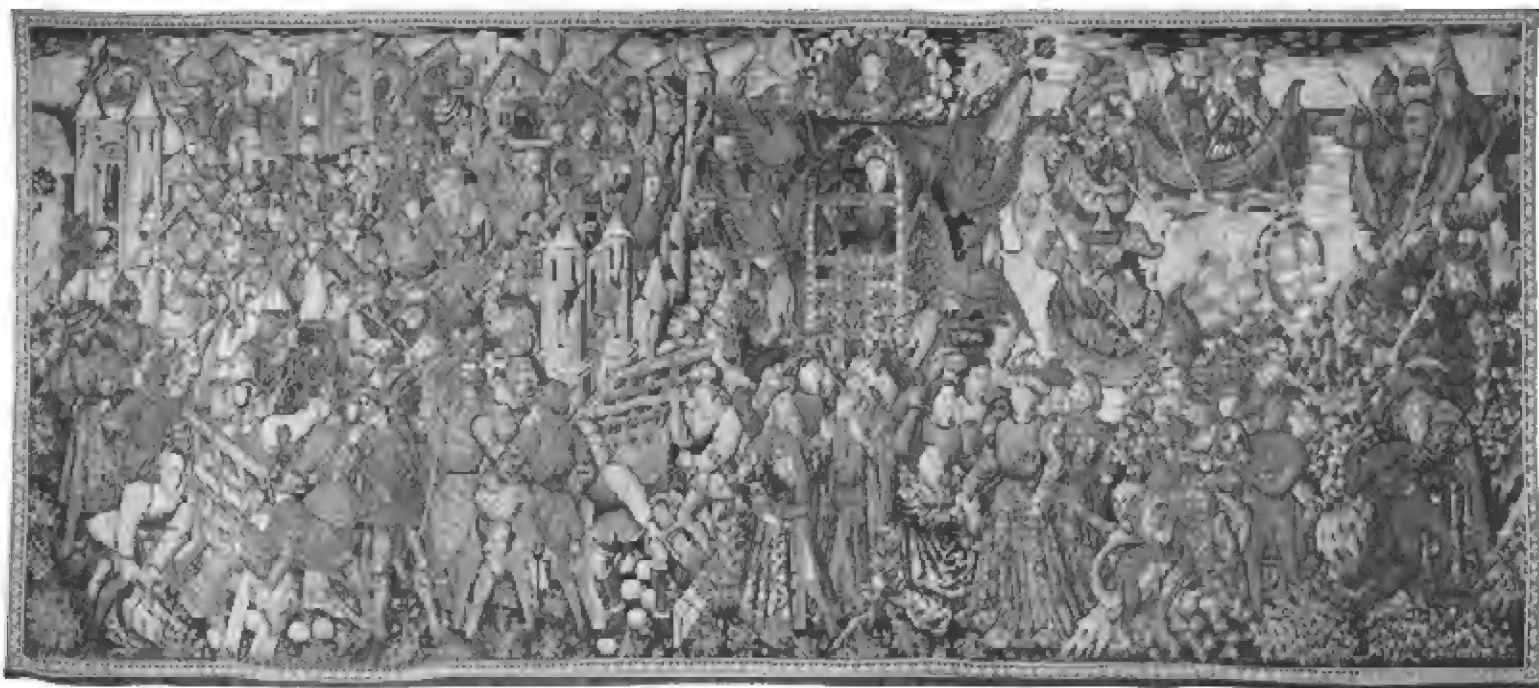


Fig. 25. *The Military Exploits and Fabulous Deeds of Alexander* from the *Story of Alexander*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1455–60. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 415 x 985 cm. Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome

Grenier's activity was not limited to the Burgundian court. Eight months before the *Alexander* set was sold to Philip the Good, Melchior and Guillaume Grenier, a son and a nephew of Pasquier, had transported the designs for the *Alexander* tapestries, along with various unnamed tapestries, to Milan at the request of the duke Francesco Sforza.<sup>37</sup> Whether this resulted in an order is unknown, but it has been suggested that the two *Alexander* tapestries now in the Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome (fig. 25), derive from a Sforza commission.<sup>38</sup> The entrepreneurial trip to Italy in 1459 was not an isolated instance, and from the 1460s the Greniers were in regular contact with many of the leading courts of Europe. A set of *Alexander* was supplied to the English monarch Edward IV during the late 1460s, while another duplicate may have been among tapestries delivered to the French court. In 1476 Federico da Montefeltro paid Pasquier's son Jean Grenier for an eleven-piece set of the *Story of the Trojan War* (a duplicate of that presented to Charles the Bold in 1472), and another set was sold to the French court before 1494, perhaps even before 1484. Jean Grenier traveled to the English court in 1486 to arrange for a similar sale to Henry VII, and another version of this design was sold to Matthias Corvinus, the king of Hungary, before his death in 1490. The wealth and status that this international trade brought Pasquier Grenier are reflected both in the donation he made to the church of Saint Quentin for the construction of an ambulatory and family funerary chapel in 1474, followed in 1475 by a gift of a set of the *Story of the Seven Sacraments*, and in the high civic offices he occupied in

Tournai—in 1481, for example, he was sent as a deputy to negotiate with the French king on behalf of Tournai.<sup>39</sup>

Each of the *Trojan War* sets alone comprised eleven pieces measuring some 9 by 5 meters, and Pasquier Grenier must have subcontracted these commissions to large, well-established workshops that could guarantee fast, efficient production. Although Cavallo has argued that there is no certainty that the tapestries that passed through Grenier's hands were woven in Tournai, it seems unlikely that he would have advanced money and material too far afield. If nothing else, it would not have been in the interest of Tournai and the local guild, of which Grenier was such an important member, if he had procured too large a percentage of his wares from workshops other than those of his townsmen. Indeed, Grenier's international dealings may have played a large part in promoting and developing the prestige and success of the Tournai tapestry ateliers during the third quarter of the fifteenth century. In his will Grenier asked that "all my cartoons" (*tous mes patrons*) be divided among his four sons, a clear indication of the commercial importance of the cartoons.<sup>40</sup> His sons maintained a flourishing business, though the scale and quality of their products seem to have been more modest than those of their father's signature series.

Soil's research in the Tournai archives (now destroyed) demonstrated that if the Greniers' firm was the most successful in the town, there were several others of considerable size. The prosperity of Tournai's workshops appears to have suffered, however, from the prolonged hostility between Charles VIII of France and



Maximilian I of Germany during the 1480s and early 1490s, and from competition from other centers, especially Brussels, during this period. In 1497 the magistrates of Tournai ordered six chambers of tapestry from Jean Grenier as a gift for Philip the Handsome, to persuade him to annul the ban that he had imposed on the sale of Tournai products in his dominions.<sup>41</sup> Philip must have been impressed, because he made substantial purchases from Jean between 1502 and 1506.<sup>42</sup>

During the fifteenth century several distinguished workshops also operated in Lille. The town was a regular port of call for the Burgundian household from 1369, and local tapestry production flourished in the late fourteenth century. Robert Poinçon (fl. 1373–99), weaver of the Angers *Apocalypse*, became a burgher of Lille in 1397, and six other master weavers, all originally from Arras, are recorded there in the following decade or so.<sup>43</sup> Evidence that workshops of great distinction existed during the third quarter of the century is also provided by documentation relating to orders filled in Lille for both the duke of Burgundy and other clients. Under Philip the Good, Lille continued to be the center of Burgundian financial administration for Flanders, Artois, and Burgundian Picardy, and it was Philip's principal place of residence during the 1450s, when he built a new palace there.<sup>44</sup>

The first Lille weaver of international reputation was Pierre de Los (fl. 1448–66), who in 1448 was named as one of the Lille agents for the Truye brothers of Arras. His activity is known largely through correspondence between the Medici and their agent in the Low Countries, Gierozzo de' Pigli. As such it will be considered below in the context of fifteenth-century Italian patronage. Like the Greniers, de Los apparently owned a stock of quality tapestry cartoons painted on cloth. He lent the cartoons to the sheriff's hall in Lille every year between 1460 and 1466, as decorations for the annual celebration of the Feast of Behourt.<sup>45</sup>

Other Lille workshops also enjoyed a high reputation. In 1458 Philip the Good commissioned one Jean Lecoq of Lille to weave a *Baptism of Clovis* tapestry, probably part of the *Story of Clovis* tapestries displayed at Bruges in 1468 (these were, perhaps, a duplicate of the tapestries of the subject that survive at Reims).<sup>46</sup> Another master weaver named Camus Dugardin (fl. 1450–70) is documented sending tapestries to England in 1466 and making sales to Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1468), and to his cousin Charles II de Bourbon (1469).<sup>47</sup> In the 1460s Philip also placed a number of commissions with a Lille master called Jehan (Jan, Jean) de (le) Haze (fl. 1462–72), including that for the famous millefleurs armorials (before 1466) of which a section survives in Bern (fig. 26).<sup>48</sup> In 1469 the magistrate of Antwerp purchased another set from de Haze as a gift for Charles the Bold, who had inherited the dukedom in

1467.<sup>49</sup> Charles bought more armorials from him in 1470, and in 1472 de Haze was described as a “valet de chambre” and “ayde de la tapisserie” to Charles.<sup>50</sup> According to the Burgundian accounts of 1466, de Haze was a resident of Brussels, a description that has prompted claims that he must have relocated his workshops to Brussels by this date and that the Bern millefleurs is therefore a Brussels product.<sup>51</sup> This is not certain, however. De Haze held high municipal appointments in Lille between 1462 and 1469, indicating that he continued to be resident primarily in that town; this may be a case of a rich merchant having residences in two towns so that he could trade in both centers.<sup>52</sup> De Haze does not appear, moreover, in the lists of the bourgeois of Brussels. It is nonetheless significant that from the 1460s he had a Brussels base, because at this date Brussels was becoming an increasingly important center of trade and production.

Tapestry weaving had evidently taken place in Brussels from early in the fourteenth century.<sup>53</sup> There, as in Arras, Tournai, and other Netherlandish centers, the development of the local tapestry trade appears to have coincided with the decline of the quality-cloth industry. At first the Brussels tapissiers were affiliated with the woolworkers' guild, and between 1417 and 1447 the registers of this corporation list about five hundred master weavers, journeymen, and apprentices, including members of the city board of magistrates. In 1447 the tapestry weavers formed an independent guild.

During the second third of the fifteenth century Brussels assumed increasing importance to the Burgundian court. The town was absorbed into Philip the Good's territories in 1430 following the death of Jean de Saint Pol (himself the owner of an important tapestry collection), and the reconstruction of the old Coudenberg Palace was begun during the 1430s, largely at the town's expense, in order to encourage Philip to move to Brussels. A great hall was added in the 1450s and from 1459 the palace became the duke's principal residence. The resulting prosperity of the town is reflected in the enormous amount of construction that occurred after 1430, including the town hall (completed in 1455) and the church of Notre-Dame du Sablon.

Given the proximity of the Burgundian court as patrons and the presence of merchants as financiers, it is hardly surprising that the Brussels tapestry industry flourished during the late fifteenth century. Despite the large number of weavers recorded in Brussels during this period, however, and the volume of tapestries that they must have produced, it is difficult to attribute any specific weavings to these workshops.<sup>54</sup> On becoming duke of Brabant, Philip inherited a number of tapestries subsequently listed in his inventory as “de Brabant,” but there is no certainty that they were woven in Brussels. A large tapestry of the *Justice of Trajan* and

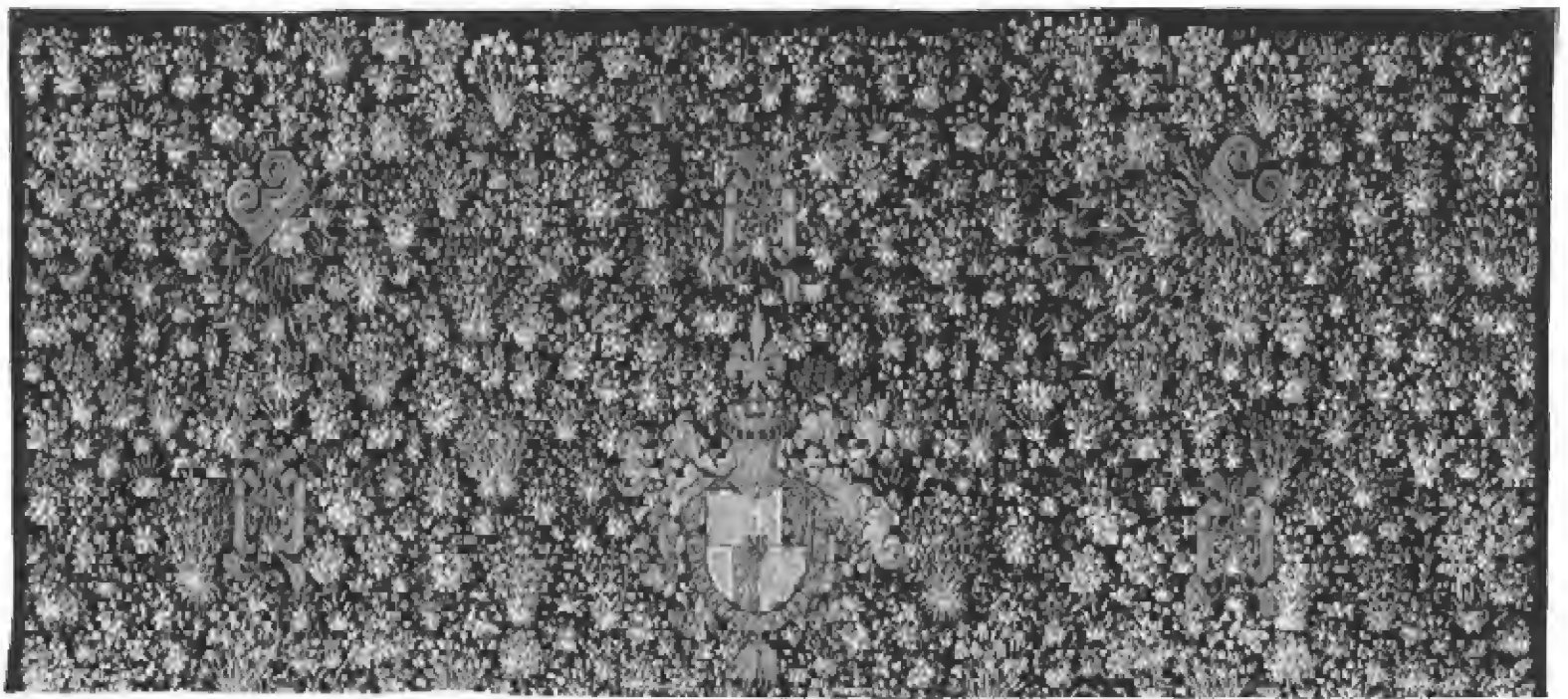


Fig. 26. *Millefleurs with the Arms of Philip the Good*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, in the workshop of Jehan de Haze, before 1466. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 306 x 687 cm. Bernisches Historisches Museum

*Herkinbald* (fig. 27), thought to be based on the wall paintings of these subjects executed by Rogier van der Weyden (1399–1464, town painter from 1435) in the Brussels town hall between 1432 and 1445, has often been cited as one of the earliest identifiable products of a Brussels workshop; considering Rogier's status as town painter, the assertion has merit but is still open to question. An antependium with scenes from the Passion of Christ, woven for Stefano Nardini, archbishop of Milan, in the late 1460s (cat. no. 1), may also derive from Brussels, as Nardini is known to have visited the town in the year before the hanging was delivered to Milan; again, however, a Brussels attribution is not certain. A scene of the *Adoration of the Magi* (cat. no. 6) woven as an antependium for Charles de Bourbon has been identified—but only tentatively—as a Brussels product owing to the affinity of its style with that of the Master of the View of Saint Gudule. One can only assume that by the mid-fifteenth century there were a number of workshops in Brussels capable of producing large, high-quality tapestries.

The prominence of Arras, Lille, Tournai, and Brussels as centers of tapestry trade and production during the fifteenth century should not overshadow activity in other towns during the same period. In Antwerp the *legwerkers*, who had once belonged to the same corporation as the linen weavers, formed an independent association in 1415.<sup>55</sup> A tapestry guild was established in Oudenaarde in 1441, and tapestry weavers were resident in Bruges from the late fourteenth century (though not, apparently, in sufficient numbers to justify the creation of an independent guild; they belonged

instead to the corporation of *lissekleeuwevers*) and in Louvain.<sup>56</sup> Archival evidence indicates that tapestries were produced in Enghien (located between Tournai and Brussels) from early in the fifteenth century, and from 1469 a tapestry market appears to have been held there.<sup>57</sup> Documents relating to the sale of tapestries through Bruges suggest that by the mid-fifteenth century the town's merchants were also procuring a considerable volume of tapestries from Ghent.<sup>58</sup> Little is known of the weaving activity in Antwerp, Oudenaarde, Bruges, or Ghent during the fifteenth century. There are no records of commissions for large, high-quality tapestries from workshops in these centers, and it seems likely that their production was of a more modest quality than that of the renowned workshops in Tournai, Lille, and Brussels.

It should be briefly noted that there has been much debate about the origin of the many late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century tapestries depicting figures on a millefleurs ground. In the early twentieth century it was assumed, without documentary evidence, that they were produced in itinerant workshops in the Loire valley (where proportionally large numbers of the tapestries have survived). More recently scholars have recognized that these weavings were probably made in workshops in the Low Countries.<sup>59</sup> The numerous surviving tapestries with French coats of arms indicate the relative ease with which medium-quality tapestries could be obtained from the Netherlandish workshops, woven either from existing cartoons—adapted to various dimensions and with the addition of heraldic devices—or from cartoons supplied by the patrons.



#### DISTRIBUTION OF TAPESTRIES

Much of the finest-quality production of the fifteenth century resulted from direct negotiation between patrons, merchant financiers, and the leading masters of the day. A much larger volume of good-, medium-, and low-quality tapestry was traded or negotiated at annual and biennial fairs in centers such as Bruges, Bergen op Zoom, and Antwerp, where masters and merchants hired booths to display existing stock and where commissions could be placed for special orders.

Bruges had prospered as the center of the English wool trade during the fourteenth century. During the fifteenth century it was a flourishing international port with communities of Italian, Spanish, Scottish, English, and German merchants playing an important role in channeling Netherlandish products to patrons in their home countries.<sup>60</sup> With so many rich merchants resident in the town, it is hardly surprising that it became one of the most important centers of the tapestry trade. In 1438 Pero Tafur compared it favorably with Venice, citing tapestry among the luxury commodities that were traded there.<sup>61</sup> As noted above, both Pasquier Grenier and Pierre de Los had depots in Bruges. It was in Bruges that Philip the Good purchased from the Italian merchant Giovanni Arnolfini (subject of the famous portrait by Jan van Eyck) a six-piece set of the *Life of the Virgin* as a gift for Martin V; it was also in Bruges that he purchased a set depicting an allegory of the pope, the emperor, and the nobility as a gift for Eugene IV in 1441.<sup>62</sup> When Alfonso V of Aragon (Alfonso I of Naples) sent agents to the Low Countries in the early 1450s, they based themselves in Bruges and purchased

more than forty tapestries on his behalf. These and numerous other transactions demonstrate the town's importance as a point of display, contract, and sale.<sup>63</sup> Bruges declined as a center of the tapestry trade from the early 1480s, partly because the Zwyn (the outlet to the North Sea) silted up and partly because Maximilian I banished the foreign merchants to Antwerp as a punishment for their role during the uprising of Bruges in 1488 against his authority.

A biennial fair was held at Bergen op Zoom, where many English patrons made purchases and placed orders.<sup>64</sup> The ongoing, flexible relationships that developed through such fairs are revealed in the documented transactions between the London merchant Jan Pasmer (fl. ca. 1477–93) and the Brussels weaver Gielis van de Putte (ca. 1420–1503) at the Bergen op Zoom market. In 1477 Pasmer commissioned van de Putte to weave a tapestry measuring 3.59 by 15.07 meters, according to a design in which the central scene of the Last Supper was to be replaced by a scene of Saint Gregory delivering mass before the doctors and bishops of the church. Two years later van de Putte received an order from Pasmer and an associate for two more tapestries, one measuring 3.25 by 12.5 meters and the other 3.25 by 13.23 meters, both to be woven from cartoons supplied by the patrons.<sup>65</sup>

In the long term the most important center of trade was Antwerp. Tafur described the Antwerp fair when he visited in 1438 as "the largest in the whole world, and anyone desiring to see all Christendom, or the greater part of it, assembled in one place can do so here. The Duke of Burgundy comes always to the fair, which is the reason why so much splendour is to be seen at his

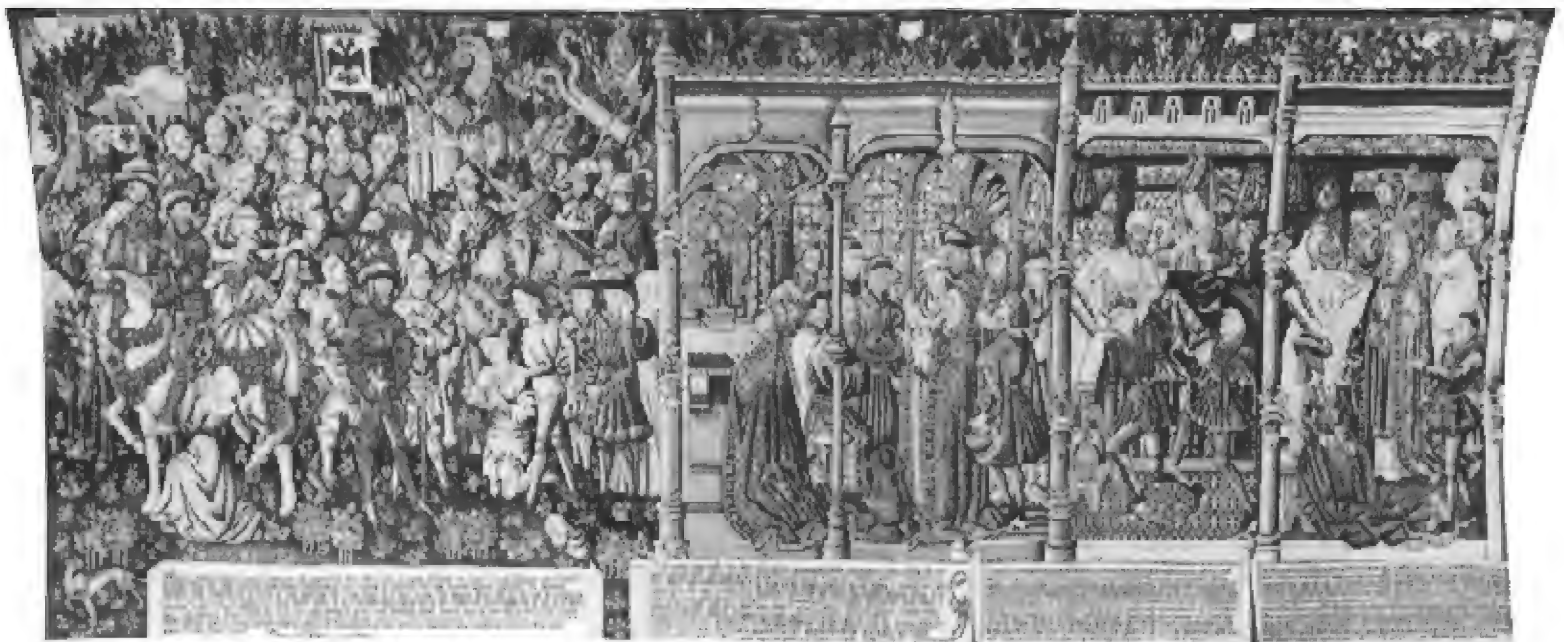


Fig. 27. *The Justice of Trajan and Herkinbald*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1460. Wool and silk, 461 x 1053 cm. Bernisches Historisches Museum

court.” He noted that “pictures of all kinds are sold in the monastery of St. Francis,” while “in the church of St. John they sell the cloths of Arras.”<sup>66</sup> Apparently frustrated by restrictions imposed on them by the Bruges authorities, the tapestry weavers of Brussels, Louvain, Enghien, and Ghent formed the Saint Nicholas Guild to establish a permanent presence in Antwerp. In 1481 the guild signed an agreement with the Dominicans allowing them to use part of their monastery as a marketplace during the biennial fairs and as a depot in the interim. Despite attempts by Bruges to attract the tapestry merchants back in 1494, they renewed their contract with the Antwerp Dominicans and continued to do so until 1553, when a new building was constructed specifically as a tapestry market.<sup>67</sup> The Portuguese made Antwerp the European center of the spice trade about 1500, and with the evolution of the town as the locus of finance and trade in northern Europe, other centers of tapestry distribution rapidly declined in significance.

#### WORKSHOPS AND GUILDS

The Netherlandish tapestry industry of the fifteenth century comprised numerous independent workshops, some large and some small, which, for reasons of expediency and practicality, were largely clustered in the main trade and population centers. These workshops operated sometimes at the direction of merchant-financiers, sometimes according to ad hoc arrangements made between the workshops themselves. (Detailed documentation of ad hoc collaboration by the smaller workshops is lacking for fifteenth-century Netherlandish production, but a vivid impression of the mechanisms of such collaboration can be gleaned from documents relating to the functioning of small workshops in Paris during the second two-thirds of the sixteenth century.)<sup>68</sup>

The growth of the tapestry industry in the fifteenth century was paralleled by the development of tapestry guilds in the principal centers of production; the guilds sought to promote local industries and to limit external competition.<sup>69</sup> In order to manufacture and trade a particular product in the chief Netherlandish cities, a master had to be a member of the local guild. The guilds were hierarchic, governed by elected officials who enforced guild regulations and often played an important part in local politics. In Tournai, masters were required to locate their workshop within the city, for ease of guild supervision. According to a regulation of 1476, a master was allowed to have only four looms, while a regulation of 1479 stipulated that workshops were to be located in a room giving onto the street—again, for supervisory purposes.<sup>70</sup>

Similar rules probably applied in other centers, though it is not clear how strictly such regulations were enforced. Regulations stipulated that weavers could work only by daylight and specified the festivals they had to observe. Masters had to submit to regular visits by the officers of the guild to ensure compliance with guild regulations. When a tapestry had been completed, the officers of the guild applied a mark to the border signifying that the weaving had been approved. During the fifteenth century the marks were presumably in wax or lead. It was not until 1528 that Brussels tapestries were required to carry a mark woven into the selvage, a stipulation that was extended to other Netherlandish centers in 1544. A weaver found to be using inferior materials or producing substandard tapestries was in danger of having his products confiscated and destroyed. Guild regulations also imposed fines and other penalties on masters who left their towns to practice elsewhere.

Membership in the guilds was strictly controlled, and during the fifteenth century masters were generally restricted to employing one or two apprentices (who could be women). Apprentices were normally taken on from the age of eight. Their term of training varied from center to center during the fifteenth century, but the standard was three years (in Tournai it was two years in 1408, but by 1472 it had risen to four; it was scaled back to three in 1496).<sup>71</sup> On the completion of their training the apprentices became journeymen. Children of masters did not have to serve an apprenticeship, but if they wanted to become masters they, like any other apprentice, were required to produce a “masterpiece” and to pay a fee to the guild. These conditions inevitably ensured that most guilds were dominated by self-perpetuating family dynasties. In most towns masters who had served their apprenticeship elsewhere had to pay a higher entry fee to the guild than did natives of the city.<sup>72</sup>

Many early historians took references to haute-lisse weavers in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century sources as evidence that medieval tapestry production was largely undertaken on high-warp looms. Research by Salet, Joubert, and others has indicated, however, that the term “haute lisse” was often applied to high-quality goods in general. As the faster and more efficient production tool, and as the predominant production technique of the sixteenth century, the low-warp loom was probably also used for the majority of fifteenth-century production.

Likewise in need of vigorous correction is the misconception—propagated by William Morris in the late nineteenth century and developed by Jean Lurçat and other French weavers in the twentieth century—that medieval weavers were designer-



craftsmen. Medieval and Renaissance weavers worked to produce designs as fast as possible, and they therefore utilized detailed cartoons that freed them from the time-consuming invention of new elements. The weaver's essential role, and skill, lay in interpreting the image as woven material. The notion that weavers invented and added decorative motifs during the course of

weaving, much as a jazz musician might improvise on a theme, is at odds with the economic circumstances in which tapestries were produced. Of course weavers could, and did, adapt cartoons before work began and even draw their own cartoons, practices that became the subject of heated disagreement in Brussels in the mid-1470s.

1. Heinz 1963, pp. 15–27; Rutschowskaya 1990.
2. Heinz 1963, pp. 28–43; Cavallo 1993, pp. 73–74.
3. Joubert 1993, pp. 24–28.
4. Basel 1990.
5. For overviews of and further bibliography on the origins and development of medieval tapestry, see, especially, Heinz 1963, pp. 29–86; Lestocquoy 1978; Cavallo 1993, pp. 26–81; Joubert 1993; Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 10–75; and Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 25–44.
6. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 9–17.
7. Salet 1988; Joubert 1993, pp. 24–28.
8. Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 28–29.
9. Lestocquoy 1978, *passim* (with bibliog.); Joubert 1990b; Joubert 1993, pp. 26–28. See also entries in Saur 1992– and Grove 1996.
10. Lestocquoy 1978, p. 23; Joubert 1990b, p. 602.
11. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 36–37; Joubert 1990b, pp. 602–4.
12. Prost 1902–13, vol. 2, nos. 1449, 1641.
13. “[I]l estoit trop grant et trop pesant a manier, a tendre et a mectre a l’air et ploier, et aussi qu’il n’estoit pas convenable a tendre en plusieurs lieux”; Joubert 1990b, p. 603.
14. Lestocquoy 1978 provides the most accessible recent summary.
15. Prost 1902–13, vol. 1, pp. 262–63; De Winter 1976, p. 139.
16. De Winter 1976, pp. 134–59.
17. Lestocquoy 1978, *passim*; Joubert 1990b; Salet in Cailleteau et al. 1987, p. 10.
18. Laurent 1935; Bautier 1966.
19. Salet in Cailleteau et al. 1987, pp. 12–13.
20. Lestocquoy 1978, *passim*.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28, 37.
22. Cavallo 1993, p. 67.
23. Wright 1848, p. 371; W. G. Thomson 1906, p. 96; Göbel 1933–34, vol. 1, pp. 152–53; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 55–56.
24. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 69, 98–114.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Cavallo 1993, p. 64.
27. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 39–66, esp. pp. 51–53.
28. Tafur 1926, pp. 201–2.
29. Wingfield Digby 1971; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 49–54.
30. Guesnon 1884, pp. 7ff., 32–35.
31. Vaughan 1970, pp. 19–20, 254.
32. Soil 1892, pp. 15, 37. Soil’s study of the Tournai archives distinguishes between the activity of “tapissiers”—tapestry weavers—and that of “hautelisseurs”—weavers of fine cloth. This distinction, which is clearly supported by contemporary purchase and guild documentation, has not been observed so strictly by subsequent authors, however, with the consequence that a variety of misleading statistics and unfounded assumptions have crept into the literature.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 374–75.
34. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 71–80; McKendrick in Grove 1996, vol. 13, p. 634.
35. Soil 1892, pp. 24, 213, 376–77; Cavallo 1993, p. 66.
36. J. C. Smith 1979, pp. 339–41.
37. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 73, 82, 100.
38. Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer 1998.
39. Soil 1892, p. 316.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 316.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 246–47.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 248–50.
43. Cavallo 1993, p. 66.
44. Vaughan 1970, pp. 136, 242.
45. Lestocquoy 1978, p. 90.
46. M. Sartor 1912, pp. 58–64.
47. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 84, 89.
48. J. C. Smith 1979, p. 340.
49. For the possibility that this was a set of the *Story of Alba* (*Foundation of Rome*), see Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, pp. 175, 178. A single panel of the *Story of Tarquin*, which may derive from a set of *Alba* cartoons, survives in the cathedral of San Salvador in Zamora, Spain; see Tournai, Brussels, and Rijkhoven 1985, pp. 147–49.
50. Cavallo 1993, p. 68.
51. Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, pp. 166–67.
52. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 95–96.
53. Cuvelier 1912; J. Duverger 1934; Schneebalg-Perelman 1978; E. Duverger 1986; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 45–53; Smolar-Meynart 2000, pp. 89–90.
54. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 41.
55. E. Duverger in Antwerp 1973, p. 17.
56. Van Uytven 1959–60; Van Uytven 1972; E. Duverger in Bruges 1987, pp. 20–30; De Meüter in Oudenaarde 1999, pp. 26–27.
57. Mons 1980, p. 7; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 168–76.
58. E. Duverger in Bruges 1987, p. 46.
59. Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, pp. 168–75.
60. Blockmans 1992.
61. Tafur 1926, p. 199.
62. E. Duverger in Bruges 1987, p. 47.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–52.
64. McKendrick 1987, p. 522, n. 19.
65. Donnet 1896, p. 272; J. Duverger 1971.
66. Tafur 1926, p. 203.
67. Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, pp. 180–81.
68. Grodecki 1985.
69. For the Brussels guild, see Wauters 1878, esp. pp. 32–49, and Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, pp. 164–65; for Tournai, see Soil 1892, *passim*; for Bruges, see Bruges 1987, pp. 20–28; for Oudenaarde, see Oudenaarde 1999, pp. 26–47; for other centers, see Göbel 1928, *passim*.
70. Soil 1892, pp. 116–17.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–21.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 117.







# Artists and Cartoonists in Northern Europe, 1380-1480

There is nothing to prevent an artistically gifted weaver from drawing a design onto the plain warps and then following that outline without any further guidance. The complexity of reproducing a decorative or figurative image in woven form, however, has ensured that from the medieval era (and probably earlier) European weavers have depended on a full-scale design now generally known as a cartoon (*cartone* in Italian, *patron* in French). Cartoons were especially necessary in industrialized Netherlandish tapestry production, where the weavers had to translate the designs specified by patrons or merchant-entrepreneurs into woven form as quickly, accurately, and economically as possible. In turn, while a cartoon could be painted without preparatory work, the scale and intricacy of medieval and Renaissance tapestry designs were such that the overall composition was inevitably developed from preliminary sketches, of which the final version is often described today as the model (*modello* in Italian, *petit patron* in French). Consideration of the design of a tapestry therefore requires examination of two closely related but distinct components, the preparatory drawing and the cartoon. What follows is a brief introduction to the circumstances in which these

were usually created in the period between the development of the Netherlandish tapestry industry in the late fourteenth century and 1480.

## MATERIALS AND USAGE

Documentation of tapestry designs and cartoons during the late medieval era is extremely fragmentary. Drawings were the artist's most important intellectual property and as such were passed from father to son, or from master to apprentice, but workshop use took a heavy toll, and there is little evidence in northern Europe before the seventeenth century of any tradition of carefully collecting and preserving such materials. Only two surviving groups of tapestry designs have been identified as dating from before 1500. One is a suite of five preparatory drawings relating to a lost set of the *Story of Alexander*—possibly an updated version of the series on the subject that Pasquier Grenier supplied to various European clients about 1460 (see fig. 29).<sup>1</sup> The other comprises ten whole or fragmentary drawings of an original suite of eleven preparatory drawings for the *Story of the Trojan War* that Grenier provided to numerous patrons between the mid-1460s and the mid-1490s



Fig. 29. *Modello* for the *Battle against Porus and the Indians* from the *Story of Alexander*, ca. 1460. Pen and ink on parchment, 31 x 61.5 cm. Bernisches Historisches Museum

Opposite: Fig. 28. Detail of cat. no. 3: *Modello* for the *Sack of Troy* from the *Story of the Trojan War*

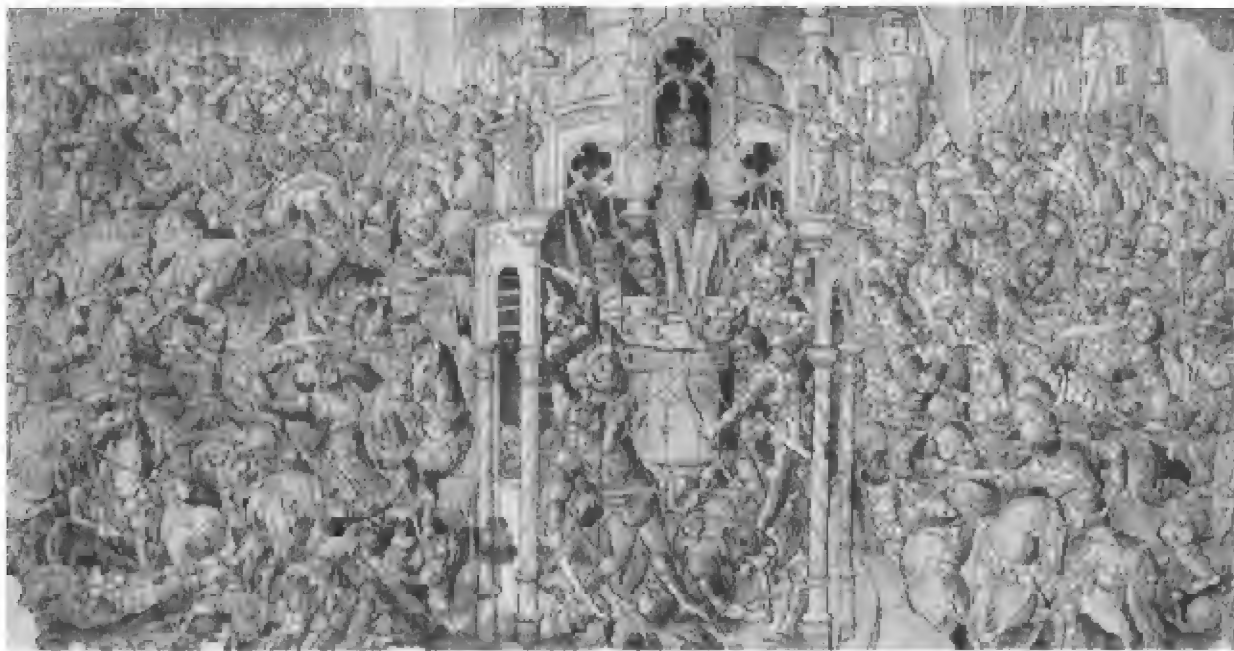


Fig. 30. Preparatory drawing or *modello* for the *Death of Troilus, Achilles, and Paris* from the *Story of the Trojan War*. Coëtivy Master (?), ca. 1465. Brown ink and colored wash on paper, 30.6 x 57.4 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

(see fig. 30 and cat. no. 3). It has also been suggested that a Netherlandish drawing of a *Bear Hunt* (fig. 31) dating from about 1470–90 may be a preparatory design for a tapestry.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence relating to medieval cartoons is even more limited—none survive—and our knowledge of their character and use is dependent on written records, the tapestries that were woven from them, and deductions from later practice. The earliest extant

cartoons date from the beginning of the sixteenth century and are all painted in thin washes of body color on large sheets of paper glued together from many smaller sheets. Documents confirm that many fifteenth-century cartoons were painted on paper, though linen was also frequently used. This is hardly surprising, since the Netherlands were the center of the European linen trade.



Fig. 31. *Modello* for a tapestry of a *Bear Hunt* (?). Southern Netherlands, ca. 1470–90. Pen and brown ink on paper, 28.6 x 42.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.822)



Production conditions were inauspicious for the survival of tapestry cartoons. Before weaving started cartoons were generally cut into strips and pinned against the plain warp threads, so that the weavers could trace the outlines onto the warps in ink or charcoal. In the case of the high-warp loom, once work began the cartoon strips would be pinned to the wall behind the weaver. For the low-warp loom—almost certainly the more common form of production in the Netherlands from the late fourteenth through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—the strip of cartoon corresponding to the area on which the weaver was working was placed directly beneath the face of the tapestry. This allowed the weaver to follow indications of color and detail by simply peering between the bare warp threads, and it speeded production of complex designs. The process was destructive of the cartoons, however, because as the weaver completed a section of the design and wound it onto the lower roller of the loom, the corresponding strip of cartoon was also wound onto the loom and crushed against the face of the tapestry. The paper or other support could be wrinkled or torn, while if the paint surface was too thick it could crack or peel—which explains why thin washes of body color were the medium of choice for Netherlandish cartoonists. In 1462 Tommaso Portinari, the Medici agent in Bruges, wrote to advise Giovanni de' Medici that if he sent more cartoons from Florence the paint layer should not be too thick. One of the previous cartoons that Giovanni had sent required repainting before it could be used again, because the paint had flaked off.<sup>3</sup>

The rigors of the weaving process frequently necessitated repairs to sections of the cartoons, so that one often finds significant variations in detail from one weaving of a design to another. Furthermore, cartoons were often too fragile to be used more than two or three times and thus might be repainted from the original models. The cartoons for Grenier's *Story of the Trojan War* series (see cat. nos. 2, 3) must have been copied during the period of their popularity between the mid-1460s and the mid-1490s, for surviving tapestries of the design, woven in almost identical materials and with similar skill, display variations of proportion and decorative detail; these differences indicate that some of the fragments were made not from the first set of cartoons but from a second-generation set.<sup>4</sup> The second-generation *Trojan War* cartoons followed the originals closely, but in other instances the later copies were less accurate. Changes were made in costume or figurative style; a complex design might be simplified—so that a popular image could be disseminated at lower cost—or a simple design might be elaborated.

Cartoons on linen were stronger than paper cartoons, though the materials and the labor required made them also more expensive. (There was, indeed, a thriving trade in the Netherlands in

painted cloths, as cheap substitutes for tapestry.)<sup>5</sup> Linen tapestry cartoons are specified in contemporary contracts and documentation. In 1390, for example, Philip the Bold paid for 200 ells of linen for cartoons for tapestries depicting shepherds and shepherdesses, which were intended for his wife; the cartoons were probably executed by the leading painter at Philip's court at Hesdin, Melchior Broederlam.<sup>6</sup> The tapestry merchant Pierre de Los had a sufficient stock of canvas cartoons to lend them to the Lille sheriff's hall annually between 1460 and 1466, as decorations for festivals.<sup>7</sup>

Medieval patrons may have considered other potential uses of tapestry cartoons when they decided to have them painted on linen. In the fifteenth century a number of churches commissioned sets of tapestries for their choirs but hung the cartoons on regular days, saving the tapestries for feast days. The choir of the cathedral church at Angers, for example, was decorated on feast days with two tapestry cycles, one the *Story of Saint Maurice*, woven in Paris in 1459 and 1460, and the other the *Story of Saint Maurille*, purchased in Paris in 1461; the cartoons were used during the rest of the year.<sup>8</sup> In such circumstances the more durable linen cartoons were obviously preferable. This was the case for a commission for a tapestry cartoon that the leading Tournai painter Jacques Daret received in 1441 from Jean du Clercq, abbot of Saint Vaast in Arras. Executed in tempera on canvas and measuring some 2.8 by 8.5 meters, the cartoon depicted the Resurrection of Christ; the scene was flanked by representations of the abbot and six monks with their coats of arms and was accompanied by an inscription. After Daret's cartoon was used to weave the tapestry in an Arras workshop, it was hung in the abbey, indicating that it was considered to have artistic merit in its own right.<sup>9</sup> From the late fifteenth century, however, as cartoon production was increasingly dominated by ateliers that specialized in paper cartoons, linen fell out of use.

#### DESIGNERS AND CONTRACTS

With the exception of the Angers *Apocalypse*, no extant fourteenth- or fifteenth-century tapestry can be traced to documented designs or cartoons by named artists. A handful of designs have been linked to individuals on the basis of stylistic comparison with works in other media. Thus the Metropolitan *Annunciation* (fig. 32) has been tentatively linked to the Hesdin workshop of Melchior Broederlam, given the tapestry's affinities with Broederlam's paintings on the wings of an altarpiece supplied to the charterhouse of Champmol, near Dijon (ca. 1393–99).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Jacques Daret's panels for an altarpiece commissioned by Jean du Clercq for the Chapel of the Virgin at the abbey of Saint Vaast (1432–35) connect the Tournai artist both with the designs for the *Story of Saint Peter* commissioned for Beauvais Cathedral in 1460 by its bishop Guillaume de



Fig. 32. *The Annunciation*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1410–30. Wool and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 351 x 297 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Harriet Barnes Pratt, in memory of her husband, Harold Irving Pratt (1877–1939), 1949 (45.76)

Hellande (completed in 1462) and with the Doria Pamphilj *Story of Alexander* (see fig. 25).<sup>11</sup> The difficulty of distinguishing the contribution of the author of the preliminary design from that of the artists who executed the cartoon, the possibility that a number of artists worked in a related style, and the paucity of surviving visual evidence ensure, however, that such attributions are conjectural. The designers and cartoonists for the majority of documented extant medieval tapestries remain anonymous.

Relatively few contracts relating to the creation of tapestry designs and cartoons survive, but those that do provide a general impression of the range of circumstances in which designs and cartoons were made during the medieval era. In many of the more ambitious princely commissions of the age, designs resulted from direct contact between the patron and artists attached to his or her court, or to a related court. The Angers *Apocalypse* (fig. 15), for example, was designed for Louis of Anjou by Jan Boudolf, a leading artist at the court of Louis's brother Charles V. Boudolf was paid in 1377 for "pourtraictures et patrons par lui faiz" (models and

cartoons that he had made) for the *Apocalypse* tapestries; as mentioned above, a manuscript borrowed from Charles V's library was one of a number of sources that inspired Boudolf's imagery for the set.<sup>12</sup> The transaction in 1400 between Isabeau of Bavaria (1370–1435, wife of the French king Charles VI) and Colart de Laon (fl. 1377–1417), a prominent artist at the French court, for cartoons for four chambers of tapestry is another instance of a direct commission from a late fourteenth-century patron to a contemporary artist. Isabeau rejected de Laon's designs, however, because the artist had not fulfilled her wishes; she engaged a tapestry merchant to arrange for others to be made instead.<sup>13</sup>

Isabeau's eventual recourse to an intermediary to identify an appropriate designer and cartoonist was also a typical practice in many of the grander projects of the medieval period. Philip the Bold's 1384 commission to the merchant Michel Bernard of Arras for the *Battle of Roosebeke* set included a payment to him of 300 francs for the cartoons of the tapestries, indicating that Bernard was responsible for seeing to their creation.<sup>14</sup> Seventy years later, when Philip's grandson Philip the Good commissioned the *Story of Gideon* tapestries from the Tournai weavers Robert Dary and Jehan de l'Ortie, the contract stated that these masters were to arrange for the cartoons to be executed by Bauduin de Bailleul or by a painter of his stature.<sup>15</sup> Bauduin, celebrated by Jean Lemaire de Belges's *La couronne margaritique* as one of the greatest artists of the day and described as a painter of *patrons*, was indeed available; in 1449 he was paid for transporting the cartoons from Arras to his ducal patron in Bruges. The apparent ease with which these negotiations were concluded suggests that close links existed during this period between the leading tapestry merchants, the chief tapestry ateliers, and the principal artists' workshops.

The scale and complex iconography of medieval tapestries ensured that the compositions were generally made according to written specifications given by the patron to the artist or to the intermediary. In 1469, for example, the church of Saint-Géry contracted with Jacquemart Pilet, an artist who had worked in the atelier of Bauduin de Bailleul in Arras, to design five tapestries of the *Story of Saint Géry* on the basis of a written document that the church had prepared.<sup>16</sup> That document is not extant, but a vivid impression of its likely character can be gleaned from a thirty-six-page prospectus detailing the visual program of a six-piece set of tapestries of the *Story of Saint Urban and Saint Cecilia* commissioned by an unidentified member of the Argentier family for the papal college of Saint Urbain, in Troyes, in the late fifteenth century. The identity and action of each figure portrayed, the attributes, the heraldic components, the Latin texts for the banderoles, and the French texts for the lower sections of the tapestry were all



specified for each of the twenty-two scenes in the narrative.<sup>17</sup> The artist was asked to complete each design with a setting continuous with the one at the start of the next tapestry. Although the Troyes tapestries have not survived (if they were ever woven), the iconographic complexity of extant choir tapestries of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggests that highly detailed specifications were the norm for choir tapestries. Similar written descriptions, presumably, were provided to the artists responsible for the larger and iconographically complex secular designs of the period.

#### THE ROLE OF THE CARTOONIST

In addition to being elaborated in a patron's prospectus, the scheme for a tapestry could be worked out in a series of *modelli* by an artist in the patron's circle; the *modelli* were then sent to the merchant, who engaged local artists to enlarge the designs into full-scale cartoons. An example of this approach is provided by the arrangements for a set of the *Story of Saint Anatolius* (1502–6; Louvre, Paris and Musée de Dijon) woven for the chapter of Salins in the Franche-Comté. In 1501 two canons traveled to the Netherlands to commission the set. The following year a contract was signed with a Brussels weaver for one piece to be made according to a design on paper that the clerics had delivered to him and from which he was to have a cartoon made. This agreement fell through, for reasons unknown, and the canons journeyed to Bruges, where they contracted for the production of the set with a different tapestry merchant. Again, the cartoons were to be prepared by a local artist. The artist was paid 84 Tournai pounds for his work, while the canvas on which the cartoons were painted cost 39 pounds; the total cost of the fourteen-piece set amounted to 1,829 pounds.<sup>18</sup>

Circumstances like these—the design executed by one artist, and the cartoon commissioned through the weaver from a different workshop—are often overlooked in discussions of tapestry production. There was in principle no reason why the artist responsible for the model could not execute the cartoon. Yet the sheer scale of tapestry cartoons must have ensured that even where a single artist was paid for both designs and cartoons, it would have been the exception that he should actually paint all of the cartoons himself. Jan Boudolf, for example, who was paid for both the designs and the cartoons of the Angers *Apocalypse*, cannot possibly have painted them all. He is known to have had at least one assistant, and in all likelihood this project of unusual scale would have been executed by a team of assistants. Such a division of labor was evidently common even with commissions of more modest size. When between 1425 and 1430 the church of Sainte-Madeleine of Troyes commissioned a set depicting the life of its patron saint, the design was provided by an artist called Jacquet, but the cartoons

were executed by both Jacquet and one Symon the illuminator (and, presumably, their assistants). Both were paid about five times more for the cartoons than Jacquet received for the preparatory drawings.<sup>19</sup> In the few other instances where the amounts paid to the designer and the cartoonist are documented, there is a disparity of similar proportions (see, for example, the discussion of the contract relating to the design, cartoon, and weaving of the *Miraculous Communion of Herkinbald* in Brussels in 1513, p. 137 below). While this disparity must largely be due to the greater expenditure of time required to create the physically larger cartoons from small designs, the execution of cartoons was also itself an interpretive and creative process. Indeed, the appearance of the final tapestry owes more to the intervention of the cartoonist than to the designer of the *modello*, which makes stylistic analysis and attribution of medieval and early Renaissance tapestry an art-historical minefield.<sup>20</sup>

The extent to which cartoonists crafted the final appearance of the tapestry as they translated a small drawing into a form appropriate to the tapestry medium is dramatically demonstrated by a comparison of the preliminary drawings and the finished tapestries of Pasquier Grenier's *Story of the Trojan War* (this is the sole fifteenth-century work for which both drawings and tapestries survive). The *Trojan War* cartoonists made a variety of modifications to the preliminary designs, minimizing spatial recession and developing the ornament, detailing, and surface pattern. In the drawings the artist largely confined the narrative to the lower portion of the composition. By contrast, as Cavallo has noted, the cartoonists integrated the lower and upper areas of the designs, utilizing a variety of devices to do so.<sup>21</sup> They often compacted the drawings' upper and lower registers, so that the foreground scenes overlap those above. In addition, the foreground figures have been made taller, and the vertical elements, such as architectural features and spears, have frequently been extended and augmented. (The cartoonist's transformation of the design is discussed in detail in the entry for the drawing of the *Sack of Troy*, cat. no. 3.)

The division of labor between designer and cartoonist illustrated by the Salins and Troyes commissions probably became common in the production of tapestry cartoons during the second quarter of the fifteenth century. When in 1438 Robert Campin (ca. 1375–1444) was commissioned to paint a series of canvases of the *Story of Saint Peter* for the chapel of Saint Pierre in Tournai, he first prepared the designs and then showed them to several masters to find the most competitive tender; he ultimately delegated the painting of the canvases to the workshop of Henri de Beaumetiel.<sup>22</sup> Although there is no evidence to support earlier suppositions that these canvases were tapestry cartoons, the delegation of duties in their production may parallel practice in the tapestry field.



Fig. 33. *A mon seul désir* from the *Lady and the Unicorn*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1490–1500. Wool and silk, 377 x 473 cm. Musée National du Moyen-Âge (Cluny), Paris

By the mid-fifteenth century, cartoon production was already a large-scale and semi-industrialized activity in the Netherlands, as may be gleaned from the advice that Giovanni de' Medici received in 1448 from his Bruges agent, Fruosino da Panzano. Commenting on the lack of appropriate designs available in the marketplace, Panzano explained that “all those that want a better than average work have it done to order, and I therefore suggest to you, if you are not in too great a hurry, send me the measurements and the story or tale you want in it, and I'll have it made by the best master that can be found.”<sup>23</sup> In 1453 Giovanni sent designs to Bruges from Florence for a six-piece set of the *Triumphs of Petrarch*. The Medici commissions were evidently just part of a much larger trade, with designs coming into the Netherlands from all over Europe for elaboration into cartoons by local workshops. Indeed, the cartoons for some of the most characteristic products of the Netherlandish tapestry industry of the third quarter of the fifteenth century appear to be based on designs by leading Parisian illuminators. For example, the aforementioned drawings for Grenier's *Trojan War* series are generally attributed to the Coëtivy Master (see cat. no. 3). Similarly, the designs for the *Lady and the Unicorn* (fig. 33) and the *Hunt of the Unicorn* sets (fig. 34 and cat. no. 5), which for many viewers epitomize medieval tapestry design, appear to have originated in Parisian workshops between 1490 and 1505 (along with a number of other, related design series).<sup>24</sup>

The volume of design commissions, whether from written programs or preliminary models, whether secular or ecclesiastical,

that were sent to the Netherlands from the 1450s, and the idiosyncratic requirements of tapestry design almost certainly encouraged the development of workshops that specialized to a large degree in cartoon production. It seems reasonable to suppose that



Fig. 34. *The Unicorn Is Found* from the *Hunt of the Unicorn*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1495–1505. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 368 x 379 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.2)





Fig. 35. *The Martyrdom of Saint Stephen* from the *Story of Saint Stephen*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1510. Wool and silk, 169 x 391 cm. Musée National du Moyen-Âge (Cluny), Paris

while some cartoons were executed in the workshops and under the supervision of leading artists like Jacques Daret and Bauduin de Bailleul, significant numbers were made in specialized workshops located near the principal weaving ateliers in the main production centers—Arras, Tournai, Lille, Oudenaarde, and Brussels. Many years later, in 1535, when Simon de Roussy, canon of Reims, engaged the Tournai weaver Jean de Moulin to produce a set of the *Story of Saint Symphorian*, the weaver agreed to have the designs that Roussy provided turned into cartoons by the “pointres qui feront les patrons audit lieu de Tournai” (painters who make the cartoons in the said Tournai).<sup>25</sup> This phrase implies a familiar and well-established routine involving a distinct group of local cartoonists that probably dated from the mid-fifteenth century.

The role played by cartoonists brings us back to an issue touched on above (pp. 31–32, 34): the possibility of attributing surviving tapestries to different centers of production on the basis of characteristic design features. In 1423 the Guild of Saint Luke in Tournai ruled that only members could make cartoons on canvas, parchment, or paper.<sup>26</sup> While this edict was not specific to the tapestry medium, it presumably embraced tapestry cartoon production. The regulation was reissued in 1480, indicating that it was still considered to be an important component of the control that the Tournai artists exerted over local production. (There is evidence that in Brussels and Antwerp such restrictions were quite effective.) In addition, while on occasion local merchants might have engaged artists from further afield for the design of particularly

elaborate and well-funded special commissions, the pressure of local connections and guild restrictions must have encouraged them to work with artists in their own community. It thus seems highly probable that local artists specializing in cartoon production played a significant part in the appearance of the more important designs produced in local workshops.

Most tapestry historians writing during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries assumed that there were local schools of tapestry design just as there were regional schools of painting. Cavallo challenged this assumption on the grounds that tapestry designs were portable, medieval weavers could move from one center to another, and merchants could commission workshops in any of a number of centers to weave tapestries from cartoons owned by that merchant. Although he recognized that the large, high-quality tapestries that survive from the fifteenth century do fall into groups with shared stylistic and technical traits, Cavallo concluded that earlier historians’ attempts to link extant tapestries to documented production centers were misguided. “The question of where a tapestry was woven,” Cavallo asserted, “is of relatively minor importance. It is far more significant to determine when the piece was woven, who designed it or what it was designed after, and who the patron and producer were.”<sup>27</sup> The present writer believes, however, that the circumstances of cartoon production for large-scale, high-quality fifteenth-century tapestries may indeed have engendered characteristic stylistic traits that varied from one production center to another, and that these should be the subject of future scholarship. The

stylistic links between design series such as the *Story of Saint Peter* and the *Story of Alexander*, or between the *Story of the Trojan War* and the *Conquest of Jerusalem*, intimate that in different centers at different times particular cartoon workshops played an important role in defining the characteristic traits of at least some of the production. In like manner, the remarkably similar compositions and figures of several groups of choir tapestries from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that the designs were produced by the same teams of designer and cartoonist (though the commissions evidently derived from geographically diverse sources).

#### CHARACTER AND STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TAPESTRY DESIGN

The requirements of tapestry design were in general markedly divergent from those of other figurative media. Tapestry was a large-scale medium, and medieval tapestry designers needed to make the whole surface interesting and decorative, while allowing for the likelihood that the tapestries would be draped around corners and partly obscured by furnishings. Technical difficulty and

the cost of labor and materials discouraged medieval patrons and weavers from expecting or attempting the gradations of color available to the artist working in paint. From an early date tapestry designers opted instead for designs that emphasized ornament, line, pattern, and richness over perspectival or atmospheric effects.

The early development of medieval tapestry design is obscured by the paucity of surviving weavings and by the evidently divergent approach to composition by artists and cartoon workshops in different centers. The *Angers Apocalypse*, with two-dimensional figures represented in shallow picture planes and with the emphasis on expressive line within a rhythmic framework of alternating colored grounds, is closely linked to a contemporary style of manuscript design at the French court. The same appears true of the *Life of Christ* (ca. 1380–1400), of which a fragment survives in Brussels (Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire). Whether these works were typical of the monumental figurative tapestries commissioned by the Valois princes in the late fourteenth century is uncertain. They stand in marked contrast to the somewhat haphazard structure of the *Nine Worthies* (ca. 1380–1400; Metropolitan Museum)



Fig. 36. *The Story of Jourdain de Blaye* (fragment). Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1380–1400. Wool, 328 x 380 cm. Museo Civico, Padua



and the more sophisticated panel of the *Story of Jourdain de Blaye* (fig. 36). As Joubert and others have commented, the *Jourdain de Blaye* panel's avoidance of blank space, use of architectural and landscape components to frame and link narrative episodes (and simultaneously to fill and enliven the surface of the tapestry), predilection for decorative and magnificent costumes, and emphasis on narrative and anecdotal detail at the expense of coherent visual structure or representational concerns became staples of tapestry composition during the following century.<sup>28</sup> These components, framed by a narrow strip of sky at the top and by a strip of grass and flowers in the foreground, appear in the *Annunciation* (ca. 1410–30; fig. 32), the *Devonshire Hunts* (ca. 1430; fig. 24), and the *Story of Alexander* (ca. 1455–60; fig. 25). From the early fifteenth century a sense of depth was introduced to tapestry design by the superposition of foreground over background figures. Throughout the fifteenth century, however, Netherlandish tapestry designers continued to avoid complex perspectival settings, opting instead for friezelike decorative compositions with episodic narratives spread across the surface of the tapestry. The eye is held to, and moved across, the tapestry by silhouetted forms that appear parallel to the picture plane.

Tapestry designers also eschewed the ever more sophisticated atmospheric and chromatic effects achieved by Netherlandish painters during the second quarter of the fifteenth century. They concentrated instead on increasing the intricacy of the surface pattern of the tapestry, whether through costume and textile ornament or landscape and architectural details. During the late 1450s and early 1460s high-quality tapestry design was dominated by such complex

pattern and narrative detail that one suspects the cartoonists intentionally created an almost baffling surface. In designs such as Pasquier Grenier's *Trojan War* or *Vengeance of Our Lord*, the eye is engaged first by a vast jigsaw pattern and begins to discern the narrative only as it explores the lines and shapes of the tapestry. The horror vacui of these designs stood in marked contrast to the more open compositions of the 1440s and 1450s.

These abbreviated comments on the character and stylistic evolution of medieval tapestry design are primarily concerned with high-quality designs, whether commissioned by individual patrons or by tapestry merchants as entrepreneurial ventures. This high-quality production was evidently paralleled by a large, diversified lower-quality production characterized by the use of old or second-hand cartoons and by millefleurs designs to which weavers had added figures copied or cut from other cartoons. The rapid growth of the industry during the second third of the century must have encouraged a variety of improvisational practices by entrepreneurial weavers. During the early 1470s the Brussels painters' guild took steps to stop weavers' creating lower-quality designs and to assert its control over all production of tapestry cartoons. According to a settlement reached in 1476 the artists obtained a monopoly on the production of storiated cartoons and designs on paper made with charcoal and crayon. Thenceforth the tapestry weavers were allowed to design only fabrics, trees, animals, and plants for their verdure; they were permitted to complete or correct existing cartoons only with charcoal, crayon, and ink.<sup>29</sup> This development had an important influence on the character of subsequent tapestry design in Brussels.

1. Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer 1998.

2. Haverkamp-Begemann in Haverkamp-Begemann et al. 1999, pp. 116–23.

3. Grunzweig 1931, pp. 98–100; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 93.

4. McKendrick 1991, pp. 76–77.

5. Wolfthal 1989.

6. Ibid., pp. 3–4.

7. Cavallo 1993, p. 68.

8. De Farcy 1875, pp. 8–9, 64–65; Göbel 1928, p. 25.

9. Wolfthal 1989, pp. 14–15.

10. Cavallo 1993, pp. 139–44.

11. Joubert 1990a; Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 48–51.

12. Henderson 1985.

13. Joubert 1990b, p. 606.

14. De Winter 1976, p. 152; Brassat 1992, p. 164.

15. “[D]e faire faire par Bauduin de Bailleul ou par autre meilleur peintre qu’ilz pourront finer, tous les patrons”; Soil 1892, pp. 374–75.

16. Cavallo 1993, p. 36.

17. Guignard 1851; Joubert 1993, p. 41.

18. Bruges 1987, pp. 172–79.

19. Guignard 1851, pp. ix–xiii.

20. Delmarcel 1982.

21. Cavallo 1993, pp. 42–43.

22. Wolfthal 1989, p. 14.

23. Gilbert 1980, p. 110.

24. Souchal 1973.

25. Soil 1892, p. 211.

26. Rolland 1932, p. 59.

27. Cavallo 1993, p. 61.

28. Joubert in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, p. 46.

29. Wauters 1878, pp. 48–49; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 47.



## I.

### *Scenes from the Passion of Christ*

#### Antependium

Designer unknown, ca. 1467

Woven in the Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, ca. 1467–68

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread

102 x 368 cm (3 ft. 4 1/8 in. x 12 ft. 3/8 in.)

7 warps per cm

Museo del Duomo, Milan (171)

(not in exhibition)

**PROVENANCE:** October 1468, donated to Milan Cathedral by Archbishop Stefano Nardini; in continuous use in the cathedral; 1953, deposited with the Museo del Duomo; continues to be displayed in the cathedral for Holy Thursday and Good Friday.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Biscaro 1916, pp. 191–94; Bossaglia and Cinotti 1978, pp. 87–88, no. 179 (with bibliog.); Forti Grazzini 1984–86, pp. 97–130; Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 12–13, 74 nn. 6, 7, 94; Forti Grazzini 1990a, pp. 38, 64–65.

**CONDITION:** When adapted to hang in Milan Cathedral on new altar designed by Pellegrino Tibaldi,

ca. 1567,<sup>2</sup> tapestry was reduced at top and bottom and widened at both sides. Result was loss of a section of sky and lower legs and feet of the foreground figures; and addition of tapestry-woven strips at each side, which depict buildings with windows and tracery evidently intended to blend with those in original tapestry. Tapestry's general condition is good despite abrasion to surface and a number of exposed warps, especially in inscription. Original tonal balance is well preserved, and colors are remarkably fresh for a tapestry of this age.

Documentary evidence indicates that considerable numbers of Netherlandish tapestries were being imported to the Italian states by the middle of the fifteenth century, but few contemporary examples have survived and even fewer can be related to a specific context. The Milan Cathedral's *Passion* antependium is the earliest imported tapestry whose context is well established. It is also important because it is the

earliest extant tapestry with a donor portrait. Although it has suffered alterations in its shape and size, this small antependium is also remarkable for its condition and color.

#### *Description*

The tapestry depicts four scenes from the Passion of Christ; these read from left to right, against an extensive landscape with hills and castles visible in the distance. The sky is rendered in a distinctive fashion of undulating waves, while the foreground that is visible between the figures is decorated with small flowers and tufts of grass. The first scene, Christ on the Road to Calvary (Matthew 27:31, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26), appears at the left of the panel, below the stone walls of a town whose spires and Gothic tracery are northern European in character. Spectators look down





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from the walls as a crowd emerges from the town gate in the left foreground, preceded by a guard who leads by ropes around their necks the two thieves condemned at the same time as Christ. They are clothed in short white smocks, their hands tied behind their backs. Behind them, two other guards carry the crosses on which they are to be crucified. Christ appears in the foreground of the group, bowed by the weight of the cross over his left shoulder. He is wearing a brown habit and a crown of thorns. A guard drags him by a rope tied around his waist, while two other guards kick him and strike him with short staves. All the guards wear elaborate tunics and turbans. The Virgin watches the procession from the left foreground, her hands clasped in anguish. Veronica is visible immediately behind her, showing Saint John the miraculous impression that, according to

medieval legend, appeared on the cloth with which she wiped Christ's face. The Virgin's cloak, the cuffs of Christ's robe, the armor of the guards, and the cross that Christ carries are richly embellished with pearls and jewels. The violence of the foreground scene contrasts with the rural idyll in the distance, where a shepherd and his flock appear on the lower slopes of a hill, probably an allusion to Christ as the Good Shepherd (John 21:4-17). Behind them, a man carries a sack toward a windmill on the summit of the hill.

The center of the tapestry represents the moment during the Crucifixion when Christ's side was pierced with a spear (John 19:34). According to medieval texts such as the *Golden Legend* this act was perpetrated by a blind centurion called Longinus, the spear guided by a servant. Longinus wears a turban decorated

with pearls and a tunic of cut and brocaded Italian velvet. Christ is represented frontally, his arms stretched out on a cross that is also encrusted with pearls, blood dripping from his wounds. He is flanked by the two thieves, whose crosses differ from Christ's in that they are made from unfinished logs. Their postures also differ in that their arms are bound over the beams and behind their backs. To the left, an angel receives the soul of the repentant thief, while at the right a devil receives that of the unrepentant thief, who is blindfolded (Luke 23:43). In the center right foreground, three richly costumed figures look on. The foremost of these, with raised arms, may represent the Roman centurion who recognized Christ as the Son of God at the moment he was pierced by the spear (a conflation of Matthew 27:54 and John 19:35). The Virgin collapses into the arms of Saint John at







the foot of the cross, in accordance with descriptions of this moment by Pseudo-Bonaventura and Ludolph of Saxony. A walled town or castle is visible in the distance.

The Deposition is represented immediately to the right of the Crucifixion. Nicodemus supports the weight of Christ's body as Joseph of Arimathea lowers him from the cross. Saint John supports the Virgin, who is fainting again at this dreadful sight. The Resurrection appears at the extreme right of the panel. Christ, carrying a cross, is stepping from a pearl-encrusted tomb, while, below, a single guard shields his eyes (Matthew 28:3). The dramatic moment is observed from the right by Saint Ambrose, patron saint of Milan, who is clothed in ecclesiastical robes and miter. He holds an open book representing the Scriptures in his right hand and gestures with his left toward a kneeling figure, generally identified as the donor, Stefano Nardini. A banderole rises from the donor's mouth with the inscription *NON INTRES IN IUDICIUM CVM SERVO TVO DOMINE* (I serve you, God, without judgment). The architectural sections framing the left and right sides of the tapestry are not original to the tapestry (see Condition).

#### *Patron*

Hardworking and effective in administration, Stefano Nardini (d. 1484) was an active member of the papal court under both Nicholas V and Calixtus III before he was elected archbishop of Milan by Pius II in 1461. The appointment was honorific, because Nardini continued to play an important part in the papal administration in Rome, for which he was eventually made cardinal by Sixtus IV in 1471, a promotion that Galeazzo Maria Sforza, duke of Milan, had been lobbying for over many years.<sup>3</sup> Sixtus claimed that Nardini's promotion was intended to encourage other members of the papal court to emulate his zeal and industry.<sup>4</sup> Remaining in Rome, Nardini applied the profits of the benefice to the construction, from 1475, of an elaborate palace near Monte Giordano known as the *Governo Vecchio* and founded a college for poor students. His contact with Milan was largely limited to correspondence with Francesco and Galeazzo Maria Sforza, and he spent little time in the diocese itself. In 1467 he was sent to France by Paul II as a papal legate and during this trip is known to have traveled to

Brussels, as it was from there that he wrote on November 18, 1467, to nominate Cardinal Barni as pope.<sup>5</sup>

Nardini appears to have returned to Italy in the summer of 1468, stopping in Milan, where he remained until October 1469. According to documents from the archiepiscopal notary, Nardini celebrated a solemn pontifical mass in the cathedral on October 16, 1468, following which he presented the chapter with a rich collection of treasures, including "a tapestry altar cloth for the main altar with the Passion of Christ made from gold, silver, and silk, lined with azure-colored silk with a fine cover the length of the altar cloth to protect it."<sup>6</sup> Other gifts included a cope and hood of blue silk with gold stars, three velvet chasubles with elaborate gold and silk embroidery, three rich altar frontals, a variety of rich orphreys, a miter embellished with pearls, two gold crosses and another of silver, and a pontifical missal. The extant antependium is generally associated with the first of these articles, an assumption that is supported by the style of the tapestry and the donor portrait it includes. Just over a year later, Nardini made two further notarized depositions on behalf of the cathedral, the first, on October 29, 1469, a gift of all the goods in his palace at the time of his death, and the second, on October 31, a gift of ten large tapestries, an armorial frontal, and various bench pieces (no longer extant), for the decoration of the cathedral. The wall hangings were woven with Nardini's arms and included a variety of Old and New Testament subjects, a combination that suggests this donation included pieces from several sets.<sup>7</sup> Their origin is unknown.

#### *Design and Place of Manufacture*

The tapestry was identified as Netherlandish when it was first published in the nineteenth century, and most historians have agreed with this identification, with the exception of Salmi (1925) and Nebbia (1962), who suggested that it might have been woven in a Milanese workshop. However, the documentation relating to the donation of an antependium to the Milan Cathedral by Nardini in 1468, shortly after his return from Brussels, and the overtly northern character of the design, have convinced all subsequent commentators of the Netherlandish origin of the tapestry.<sup>8</sup>

Although the composition was customized

for Nardini in so far as it represents both the patron and his patron saint, there is no reason to assume that the design as a whole was commissioned by him. There must have been a constant demand for altarpieces of this type, and we can assume that this may have been woven from a cartoon owned by a Netherlandish merchant and modified for the client.

Nardini's presence in Brussels in 1467, combined with the fact that several previous commentators have identified the style of design as being closely related to that of the Brussels painter Vrancke van der Stockt (1420–1495), has led to the suggestion that the tapestry might have been woven in a Brussels workshop. While this is possible, it is by no means certain. Although this must have been the period in which the Brussels workshops were strengthening their share of the tapestry market and laying the foundations for the dominance that they were to enjoy from the late fifteenth century, significant weaving activity was also taking place in centers such as Bruges, Lille, Tournai, and Arras. Thus, it would be inappropriate to assume that Brussels was the place of origin for such a small piece, although there can be no question that the leading Brussels workshops were producing tapestries of this type at this date and that the refined pictorial tapestry production of which Brussels was capable by the end of the century must have developed from a foundation of this sort of skill.

#### *Style and Designer*

Summarizing his own detailed but unpublished study of the iconographic and stylistic sources of this tapestry, Forti Grazzini has drawn attention to the modernity of the design of the Nardini *Passion* in relation to its assumed date of weaving. This issue is well illustrated by comparison with an antependium of similar date and subject, which was unpublished at the time Forti Grazzini was writing, formerly in the Wernher collection.<sup>9</sup> Although heavily restored, the Wernher panel retains the original elements of its composition, which are considerably more archaic in conception than those of the Nardini panel. The figures and landscapes are stylized, lacking in distinctiveness or strong emotional presence. With their ornate halos and costumes and calm, unindividualized expressions, the figures are similar to those in a group of designs generally dated to the late 1450s (for example,

the *Story of Saint Peter* made for Guillaume de Hellande, ca. 1460), which have been associated with the Arras-based Tournai artist Jacques Daret.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, although certain elements of the Nardini piece are certainly conceived according to a traditional decorative formula (for example, the stylized clouds, the millefleurs ground, and the pearls and jewels with which the costumes and crosses are decorated), the figural groups are more dynamic and dramatic, and the expressions and emotions more individualized. There is also a greater attempt to represent the modeling of the figures, the depth of the landscape, and specific details of the narrative (for example, the posture of the two crucified thieves).

As Forti Grazzini has demonstrated, several of the compositional elements and some of the

figures are drawn from a common vocabulary of forms developed by Netherlandish artists during the second third of the fifteenth century. For example, the arrangement of the thieves on their crosses derives from that used by the Master of Flémalle in a triptych, the *Deposition* (fragment of original, ca. 1430–32, at the Städelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, and complete copy at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), while the postures of the deposited Christ and swooning Mary look back to those in Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition* (before 1453; Prado).<sup>11</sup> Several other echoes from Rogier's work are also apparent, such as the pose and costume of the Magdalen at the base of the cross and the gesture of the resurrected Christ, which compare to those in Rogier's triptychs the *Seven Sacraments* (shortly after 1453; Musée

Royal des Beaux-Arts, Antwerp) and *Saint John* (after 1450; Staatliche Museen, Berlin-Dahlem). The composition of the scene of Christ carrying the cross, with guards kicking and beating him, and the Virgin watching from the left, is closely related to that in a late fifteenth-century French woodcut of the Passion, suggesting that here again there must have been a common source for this element of the composition.<sup>12</sup>

Noting the points of similarity between the composition of the *Deposition* section and that of a painting thought to have been copied by Vrancke van der Stockt from an original by Rogier (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), Forti Grazzini suggested that the former artist may have been responsible for the design.<sup>13</sup> Van der Stockt was a pupil of Rogier, and an attribution of the design to his hand would be logical in view of the likely date of conception. However, the figurative elements in question were presumably part of a common vocabulary and could have been created by a number of artists in his circle, while the decorative manner in which the cartoon has been realized indicates the involvement of a professional cartoonist, at the very least.

1. Bossaglia and Cinotti 1978, p. 87.

2. Ibid.

3. Marcora 1956.

4. Pastor 1936–61, vol. 4, p. 410.

5. Marcora 1956, p. 285; Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 65, n. 25.

6. "Uno pallio per lo altar maggiore de razza con la passion de Christo lavorato de oro et argento et seda foderato de tela azurra cum uno lenzolo subtile dela grandezza del detto pallio per sua conservazione"; Archivio di Stato, Milan, Notarile, Protocolli notaio Giampiero Ciocca, Donazione of October 16, 1468, no. 1; Biscaro 1916, p. 196, no. 1.

7. Subjects included: the boat of Peter, the Crucifixion, the adulteress and her accusers, the story of Susanna, the Virgin and the cross, Christ carrying the cross, the Virgin and Christ child, God the Father, the story of Stephen, Christ in the Garden of Gethesemane; *ibid.*, pp. 197–98.

8. Cinotti in Bossaglia and Cinotti 1978, pp. 87–88; Forti Grazzini 1990a, pp. 64–65, n. 20.

9. *Scenes from the Passion*, Wernher collection, Christie's, London, sale cat., June 21, 2000, no. w79.

10. Joubert 1987a, pp. 17–35.

11. Forti Grazzini 1990a, pp. 38, 65, n. 22.

12. Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 74 n. 6, 94.

13. Forti Grazzini 1990a, pp. 38, 65.





2.

## The Death of Troilus, Achilles, and Paris

Eighth tapestry from an eleven-piece set of the *Story of the Trojan War*

Design attributed to the Coëtivy Master, ca. 1465

Woven in the Netherlands, probably Tournai, between ca. 1475 and ca. 1495

Wool and silk

481 x 942 cm (15 ft. 9 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. x 30 ft. 10 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.)

6–7 warps per cm

Museo Catedralicio, Zamora

PROVENANCE: Before 1515, in the collection of Don Íñigo López de Mendoza, second count of Tendilla and first marquis of Mondéjar; 1515, possibly purchased at the public sale of Mendoza's goods in Granada by an ancestor of the count of Aliste and Alba; by descent in the Aliste and Alba family; 1619, given to the cathedral of Zamora by Antonio Enríquez de Guzmán, sixth count of Alba and Aliste (whose arms were still applied over those woven into the tapestry at the beginning of the 1900s); at the cathedral since then and displayed at the Museo Catedralicio since 1926.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCES: Gómez-Moreno 1919; Gómez Martínez and Chillón Sampedro 1925, pp. 21–31, 63–68, 113–20; Asselberghs 1972, pp. 5–94; Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 55–57; Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 14–19; McKendrick 1991 (with bibliog.); Cavallo 1993, pp. 229–49 (with bibliog.); Reynaud in Paris 1993, pp. 64–66; Asselberghs 1999, *passim*, esp. pp. 77–93.

CONDITION: Almost complete in size. Armorial devices in upper center between third and fourth inscriptions probably added later than initial weaving because they include a crimson wool of a hue different from that of the rest of the tapestry. Least well preserved of the four Zamora *Trojan War* tapestries, with numerous exposed warp threads, particularly in areas that were formerly dark brown. Underwent conservation in Madrid for this 2002 exhibition.

INSCRIPTIONS: Transcribed from left to right, the French verses are across the top of the tapestry and the Latin verses are across the bottom.

Vint Achilles derue et enragie · sus troillus qui grans confusions / faisoit des grecs pour en estrie vengie · Aux myrmidons ses gens conclusions / Print quen ce jour neussent intencions · qua troillus en cloire en grant tempeste / Son heaume casse de horions · vint achilles qui lui coppa la teste ·

(Achilles advanced, deranged and enraged, upon Troilus, who was unleashing great destruction / on the Greeks to take his revenge on them. To the Myrmidons, his own people, Achilles resolved / that on that day they should have no intentions other than to conclude it with Troilus in fierce combat. / His helmet shatters, red like wine—[and] Achilles advanced to behead him.)

Entre les pies des chevaux de hault chief · villainement achilles delessa / Le noble corps par oultrageux meschief · a la queue de son cheval lya · / Roy merion

sur achilles frappa · dont les troiens par viriles vertus / Soulx vaillance quen ce roy on trouva · recouvrent le corps de troillus ·

(At the feet of the high chief's horses, Achilles shamefully abandoned [him]. / Outrageously, he tied the noble body to the tail of his horse. / King Merion attacked Achilles, and thus the Trojans—with acts of manly prowess, / following the valiance that one found in this king—recovered the body of Troilus.)

Achilles fut par hecuba mande · au temple vint pour avoir par contrait / Polixenne avec tres renomme · archilogus qui lors fut amort trait / Paris estroit en secret en agueit · avingt hommes sus achilles ruans / Sept en tua, paris dun mortel trait · tue achilles des grecs fleur de vaillans ·

(Achilles was summoned by Hecuba. He came to the temple to claim / Polyxena with the famous Antilochus who was slain at that time. / Paris was watching secretly—rushing with twenty men upon Achilles. / He killed seven of these, but Paris with a deadly stroke kills Achilles of the Greeks, flower of the valiant.)

Treves faillies en la bataille entra · Puissant paris qui bon archier estroit · / En ce conflict ayax il rencontra · Sus les troyens grant deluge il faisoit / Paris tirs une flesche aledroit · Dentre deux costes ayax la mort senti / Fiert sus paris par force quil avoit · De son espee les bagoies fendit ·

(The truces expired, he entered the battle—Paris, strong and a good archer. / He met Ajax in this conflict, who was massacring the Trojans. / Paris shot an arrow adroitly—Ajax felt death enter between his ribs / He struck down on Paris with the strength he had, and with his sword split Paris's brow.)

Sicut hector troillus inclitus · Vascat grecos achilles instruit / Mirmidones . . . penitus . . . troillū destruit (Like Hector, the celebrated Troilus routs the Greeks. Achilles falls into line for battle / The Myrmidons . . . deeply . . . Troilus is destroyed.)

Sine cine troillus trahitur · Equi cauda turpiter ligatus / Per aquillē, merion uehitur · Contra grecos troillē lucratus

(Besides death, Troilus is dragged shamefully tied to the tail of a horse / by Achilles. Merion goes against the Greeks and recovers Troilus)

Polixenā per hecuba[am] . . . Achilles archilogus milles / Illos du . . . it septem troianos achilles (Polyxena by Hecuba . . . Achilles Antilochus soldier / To that place . . . Achilles . . . seven Trojans)

In aiacem cum fest[in]jum irruit · Pace fracte paris fortissime / Cum sagittis ayax neceruit · Dū paridem necat acerrime

(Against Ajax immediately, Paris bravely attacks, peace having been abandoned, / with arrows. Ajax precipitates his own death while zealously killing Paris.)

3.

## The Sack of Troy

Modello for the eleventh tapestry in the series

the *Story of the Trojan War*

Coëtivy Master (or circle), ca. 1465–70

Brown ink and colored wash on paper

31 x 57.5 cm (12 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$  in.)

Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris (R.F. 2146)

PROVENANCE: 1898, acquired in Berlin by the Louvre.

REFERENCES: Lugt 1968, pp. 17–19 (with bibliog.); Hébert 1976, pp. 109–10; McKendrick 1991; Cavallo 1993, pp. 229–49; Reynaud in Paris 1993, pp. 58–59, 64–66 (with bibliog.).

The *Story of the Trojan War* series epitomizes the grandest large-scale Netherlandish tapestry production of the late fifteenth century, in both design (a dense, complex narrative style) and subject matter (a classical myth reinterpreted in terms of medieval romance). The design enjoyed immense popularity, and sets are recorded in the collections of many of the northern European courts, including those of Charles VIII, king of France; Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy; Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary; Henry VII, king of England; and James IV, king of Scotland. The series enjoyed equal popularity in Italy, where sets were acquired by Federico da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, and Ludovico Sforza, il Moro, duke of Milan, striking testimony of the burgeoning market for such Netherlandish tapestries, even when their style would have looked old-fashioned in comparison to current styles of painting. Apart from its contemporary importance, the *Trojan War* series is unique in that it is remarkably well documented. We know the name of the merchant who owned the cartoons, Pasquier Grenier, and we have evidence of the terms under which he and his sons supplied weavings of this design to several clients. Moreover, ten whole or fragmentary drawings relating to the conception of the series are extant in Paris. In conjunction with the seventeen extant tapestries and fragments from various editions, it is possible to reconstruct the appearance of the entire eleven-piece set, which, when complete, measured about 105 meters in length and had a total surface area of approximately 500 square meters.



Vint achilles derue et en rage. Sus troullus qui grans confusions.  
 F'ailont des gres pour e estre uaine. Dur m'arundons les gres conclusions.  
 Vint ce jour uelleux haterions. Qua troullus e d'ouce egeru teple  
 Son heume cille de horions. Vint achilles qui luy coppa la tete.

Entre les puz des cheuals achault chiel. Vint achilles de tessa.  
 Le noble corps par oultrageur melchiel. Alla queue de son cheual lya.  
 Foy merion sur achilles. frappa dont les trois par viles uertus.  
 Suint d'aliace que se rapon trouua. fermant der le corps de troullus.



Quia hider troullus indus. Vint gress achilles m'leual.

Ne me eue troullus habita. Equi euda l'expiter ligatus.  
 Ne achilles merion uelut. Contra gress troullus h'aratus.



Achilles fut par heruba maie. Au temple du pu' auant par contrait.  
 Volere ne miec trefrenome. Achillogus qui l'ors fut amant trait.  
 Paris chait en secret en aguet. Xing homes lus achilles ruans.  
 Sept e tua paris du' un tel trait. Tue achilles des gres lie de uallas.

Treues faillies en la bataille cira. P'nullat paris qui ha archier clait.  
 Eue conflict ap'ar il reucontra. Sus les trespens arat de luge il faillit.  
 Paris tira huc fleche aladroit. Deue deue coliez ap'ar la mure leuit.  
 Fiert lus paris par force qual aum. De son cheit les haine' fendi.



Volere ne miec trefrenome  
 Achillogus qui l'ors fut amant trait

Achilles achillogus miles  
 Paris achilles des gres lie de uallas

In aicem cum sciam urui. Nam tanta pueri fortitudo.  
 Cum sagittis omne uenerat. De p'adeva urui uenerat.



### *Description of the Tapestry*

The eighth tapestry in the *Story of the Trojan War* series is divided into three sections, which depict the death of the Greek hero Achilles and the events preceding and following it, as related in the highly embellished medieval versions of the classical legend. Cartouches at the top and bottom of the tapestry contain, respectively, octets in French and quatrains in Latin, which provide a key to the main events, while inscriptions within the main field help to identify the major protagonists and aid the viewer to make sense of the confusion of figures and weapons. The coat of arms of the count of Tendilla appears between the second and third of the upper cartouches.

The left third of the tapestry represents a conjunction of the eighteenth and nineteenth battles (according to the medieval chronology of events), although the first two inscriptions relate only to the latter. Key events of the eighteenth battle appear in the upper center of the tapestry; the duel between Menelaus (*menelaus*) and Paris (*paris*), the confrontation in which Telamon (*thalamonis*) rescues Agamemnon (*agamenon*) from Philimenis (*philimenis*), and the encounter in which Antilochus (*archilogus*) unseats Brunnus de Gemellis (*brinus de guells*) with a blow of his lance. The key event of the nineteenth battle, the death of Troilus—son of Priam and Hecuba and brother of Polyxena—is represented by two separate vignettes; in the upper left corner of the tapestry Achilles (*achilles*) is about to cut off Troilus's head, while the foreground shows Troilus's headless torso being dragged by a rope that is tied to the tail of Achilles' horse, just as King Merion (*le roy menon*) attacks Achilles to bring this grotesque action to a halt. The first and second French inscriptions relate to these events.

The visual confusion of the battlefield contrasts with the single dramatic moment depicted in the center of the tapestry, the death of Achilles. To avenge her son, Troilus, Hecuba lured Achilles to the Temple of Apollo (*Le Temple Apolinaire*) with the promise of procuring Polyxena, her daughter, as his wife, where he was ambushed by Paris and his men. The temple is composed of polychrome marble pillars, bound with metal and with elaborate wrought-metal windows, that support a white stone or marble cupola, whose vaults are decorated with Gothic tracery. A bronze statue of Apollo

stands on an altar resting on an elaborate stone base carved with Gothic tracery and a metal rail surmounted by fleurs-de-lis. Two of the four candles on the altar have been extinguished by the violent ambush that is taking place in the foreground, where we see Achilles at the moment of his death. Achilles wears a red tunic and green velvet cloak, rather than armor, because of Hecuba's trickery. At his feet lie the bodies of his friend Antilochus and those of the Trojans he has killed before the fatal moment, depicted here, when an arrow from Paris's bow strikes his heel, the one vulnerable point on his body. His mother, the nymph Thetis, had held him here when she dipped him as an infant into the river Styx, the waters of which rendered the rest of his body impervious to mortal wounds.

The right third of the tapestry depicts the aftermath of this pivotal event, the twentieth battle, in which Ajax (*ajax*), although wounded by an arrow, kills Paris (*paris de tro*) with a blow of the sword that slices through his helmet. Behind them, King Philimenis, an ally of the Trojans, raises his sword in the middle of a throng of violent warriors.

### *Description of the Modello*

This is a preparatory drawing for the eleventh or last scene of the series, which depicts the conclusion of the Greek siege of Troy. At the far left, the Greeks feign their departure from Troy but go no farther than Tenedon. The central section of the drawing shows the return of the Greek soldiers at night, pouring through the breach that the Trojans made in the city walls to drag in the enormous horse the Greeks had left behind in their camp—the horse in which Ulysses and the leading Greek warriors had hidden. The Trojans are put to the sword, and piles of corpses appear in the upper background above the heads of the advancing Greeks. In the upper right center of the scene Hecuba and Polyxena encounter Aeneas as they flee, while below, Pyrrhus is about to kill Priam in the Temple of Apollo. In the right foreground Pyrrhus executes Polyxena (who he held responsible for the death of his father, Achilles), as Hecuba, crazed with grief, bites the arm of a Greek soldier. Above, Ajax seizes Hecuba and Cassandra as they attempt to escape, while the Greek troops tear down the walls of the city around them. The drawing has lost its right edge, which probably contained a narrow

section corresponding to the right side of the Zamora tapestry of this subject (the only extant weaving of this section; fig. 37). This shows an interior in which a bearded man, representing the author of the narrative, gestures back at the main scene as he converses with two men. The drawing differs from the completed tapestry design in many ways, in terms of both narrative detail and stylistic effect, an issue that will be considered below.

### *Origin of the Series*

The circumstances in which the *Story of the Trojan War* design series was conceived are unclear.<sup>2</sup> The earliest documented set was delivered to Charles the Bold between September 1471 and September 1472, the cost of the set being paid at the duke's request by the town and franc of Bruges, perhaps as part of the reparations made to Charles following the destruction of the castle of Male near Bruges in April 1472. Payment was made in installments between 1472 and 1476. The short period of time that elapsed between the request and the start of the payments for a set that had evidently already been delivered suggests that it was not made to order for Charles but, rather, that it was woven, at least in part, as a speculative venture by Pasquier Grenier. These circumstances, taken in conjunction with the design of the set, whose character relates closely to the work of the Coëtivy Master, an artist working for the French court between 1461 and 1481, have led to the supposition that the design may actually have been conceived for a French court patron sometime in the mid-1460s. The paper on which the preliminary drawings are made carries a watermark in use in the 1460s (but also later).<sup>3</sup> In an important study of the design published in 1973, Reynaud hypothesized that this French courtier may have been Jean, count of Dunois, the legitimized bastard of Louis, duke of Orléans (brother of Charles VI), because an inventory of his goods taken at his death in 1468 listed "xiiii patrons" of the *Story of the Trojan War*. Equally, as these "patrons" appear to have been large paintings, rather than small *modelli*, and as we know that the cartoons for the Grenier set remained in Pasquier Grenier's hands, Reynaud put forth as an alternative Charles of France, favorite son of Charles VII and brother of Louis XI, who became duke of Berry after his father's death in 1461.<sup>4</sup> In a more



recent study of the question, McKendrick has enhanced the appeal of the second possibility by demonstrating that the Dunois “patrons” may have been the cartoons of a large *Story of the Trojan War* set made for Dunois’s ancestor, Louis I, duke of Anjou, a century before. Dunois paid for the restoration of these “patrons” in 1465 and the addition of inscriptions to them.<sup>5</sup> As McKendrick noted, Charles of France is therefore the more likely candidate. He may well have known of the cartoons in the collection of the count of Dunois, his education would have equipped him with the taste and motivation to commission a set of this subject, and he would have had access to the Coëtivy Master.<sup>6</sup> Circumstantial support for this proposal is provided by the presence of an eleven-

piece set of the *Story of the Trojan War* in the French royal collection by 1494 and the fact that in 1495–96 Charles VIII paid for changes to the heraldic devices, indicating that the set had previously belonged to someone else, presumably closely related to the royal family. A single piece from this set, with Charles’s heraldic device of the sun woven in the upper section, survives at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.<sup>7</sup>

#### Designer

The *Story of the Trojan War* series stands out among extant fifteenth-century tapestry series because ten complete or fragmentary drawings relating to the preparatory process have survived (nine in the Louvre—of which two fragments are mounted together—and one in the

Bibliothèque Nationale de France).<sup>8</sup> In her study of these drawings, Reynaud linked their style to the work of an anonymous artist who, along with Jean Fouquet and Barthélemy d’Eyck, was one of the most important artists working for the French court during the third quarter of the fifteenth century. Known as the Coëtivy Master, from the manuscript that he prepared for Olivier de Coëtivy and his wife, Marie de Valois, natural daughter of Charles VII, which formed the basis for identification of his larger corpus, this master seems to have been a miniaturist of great ability. He evidently worked primarily in Paris, where most of the Books of Hours attributed to him were in use. His workshop was also responsible for producing paintings, stained-glass designs, and, given the close





stylistic relationship between his manuscript works and the *Story of the Trojan War* drawings, tapestry designs. Reynaud first identified him with the illuminator Henri de Vulcop, official painter to Queen Mary of Anjou and then in service to her son, Charles of France, duke of Berry, an identification that she has subsequently rescinded in favor of the artist Colin d'Amiens.<sup>9</sup> Originally of Amiens, Colin probably moved about 1450 to Paris, where he is certainly documented between 1461 and 1488. In 1461 he helped in the preparations for the funeral of Charles VII, and his continuing activity for the court is reflected by payments in 1464 and 1481 (the former for banners for Louis XI, the latter for a design for a kneeling statue of the king for his funerary monument). Colin was the son of a Tournai master, André d'Ypres, and as such, Reynaud suggests, would have been allowed to make cartoons for the Tournai tapestry industry.

Whether or not Reynaud's identification of the Coëtivy Master with Colin d'Amiens is correct, there can be little question that this master was responsible for the *Trojan War* drawings or the models from which they were copied. For example, a drawing of the *Sack of Troy* (Vatican Library), generally attributed to the Coëtivy Master, the preliminary stage for an uncolored manuscript illumination, includes a soldier turning to look over his shoulder and a soldier in the act of killing a crowned figure, who are directly based on figures within the final scene of the tapestry series (the soldier in the left foreground and Pyrrhus killing Priam). Although this example alone might be attributed to a later artist copying an earlier model, the number of such correspondences of figure, facial type, and composition between the work of the Coëtivy Master and the tapestry drawings leaves little doubt that they originated in the same workshop.<sup>10</sup> As Reynaud has demonstrated, the Coëtivy Master may also have played an important part in the design of other tapestry series whose character is closely related to that of the *Story of the Trojan War*, such as the *Vengeance of Our Lord*.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Literary Sources and Antecedents*

As Asselberghs and more recently McKendrick have demonstrated, the complex narrative of the *Story of the Trojan War* tapestries derives from postclassical sources rather than the classical text of Homer.<sup>12</sup> Much of the structure

and detail of the narrative depend on the sixteenth-century accounts of Dares the Phrygian and Dictys the Cretan, both of whom claimed to be eyewitnesses of the war. These texts enjoyed great popularity during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and were transcribed and translated many times. Dares' text was especially influential, providing the model for the late twelfth-century *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, which in turn formed the basis for the Sicilian Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae* (written 1280–87). These then provided the sources for many more late medieval vernacular texts. The earliest documented tapestry renditions of the *Story of the Trojan War* are recorded in the collection of Louis, duke of Anjou, by 1364, including one enormous set that was the largest in his collection (the cartoons for which may have been those surviving in the collection of the count of Dunois a century later). Thereafter, sets of this subject, probably from a variety of designs, were acquired by many of the leading patrons of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, including Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy; Charles VI, king of France; and Sir John Beaumont (following whose death in 1396 the set passed into the English royal collection). The development of the Grenier series appears to have followed a renewed interest in the Trojan legends that developed during the 1450s and 1460s at the French-speaking courts (Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, had seventeen manuscripts of the Troy story in his library, and Raoul Lefèvre was commissioned to edit a *Recueil des histoires de Troie*, of which the first two books were produced in 1464).<sup>13</sup> In part this may have been stimulated by a renewed interest in this region of the Mediterranean resulting from the fall of Constantinople in 1453, although there is no evidence of a specific propagandistic subtext to the design of the Grenier set. As McKendrick has demonstrated, the author of the highly complex program appears to have faithfully followed the texts of Benoît de Sainte-Maure and Guido delle Colonne, using these authorities for many of the narrative details of the scenes. For example, the way that Achilles has wrapped his cloak around his left arm as a shield in catalogue number 2 is a detail that derives directly from Benoît de Sainte-Maure's text.

#### *Character and Purpose of the Preparatory Drawings*

As has long been recognized, the drawings were created as part of the preparatory process in the development of the tapestry designs. They are executed in a precise hand and evidently represent a neat copy of previous sketches in which the composition and principal figurative groupings of the narrative scheme had already been established. As Cavallo has noted, although they have often been described as pen drawings with minimal use of color wash, color is actually extensive and carefully applied. The drawings have the same detailed richness as a manuscript illumination. Since their author appears to have been a master illuminator, this is hardly surprising, but the artist has conceived the design in a frontal, friezelike manner appropriate to the tapestry medium. The action moves across and up and down the surface of the page, rather than indicating recession and depth, although the third dimension is not excluded altogether.

Yet if the relationship of the drawings to the tapestries is readily evident, their exact role in the preparatory process has been the subject of some debate.<sup>14</sup> As previous commentators have long recognized, there are considerable differences between the compositions and figurative groupings depicted in the drawings and those of the final cartoons (and the tapestries woven from them). Assuming that the drawings were the final *modelli* for the cartoons, Souchal suggested that these variations demonstrated the liberty of the cartoonists in interpreting the designs, but as Cavallo and McKendrick have pointed out, the changes were actually much more considered than Souchal's generalization allowed for. Generally speaking, the changes can be divided into three types: changes that relate to the elaboration and visualization of the narrative by the cartoonists; changes that the cartoonists made to accommodate the designs to the tapestry medium; and changes that seem to have been determined out of respect for the narrative detail of the sources.

The nature of the first of these changes can be illustrated by comparing the drawing for the *Sack of Troy* (cat. no. 3), and the single weaving of this design that survives in Zamora (fig. 37). As will be apparent from examining the area above the back of the Trojan horse, the cartoonists have replaced the rather characterless



Les des cy d'auant le d'auant d'auant le d'auant  
 ps par multatour melchior - Ma queue de son cheval ho  
 a sur achilles - frappa - Dont les troies par hie des uertus  
 acc que le ruyon trouua - fermant sur le corps de trillus

Achilles tue par heruba mad - Au temple ou po auoir par col  
 Volere ne saut trebreuine - Archilagus qui lors fut amori  
 Paris chate en ferret en aquet - d'ung homes sus achilles r  
 Sept e ma paris du mortel trait - Tue achilles des gres de d



S me eme trillus trillus - Equi tanta hepiter ligatus  
 D...

Pultrina per bit... Achilles arbillou





3

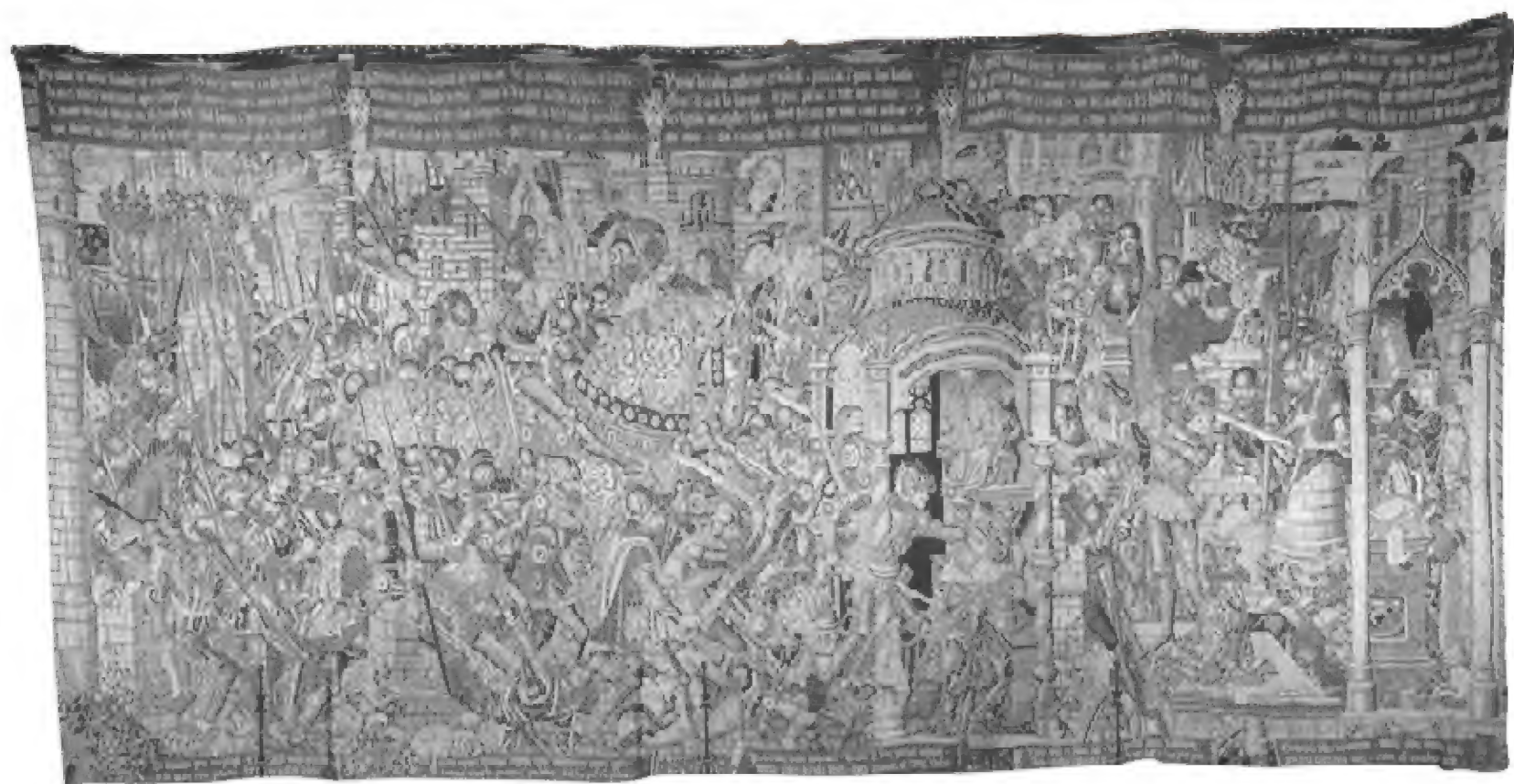


Fig. 37. *The Sack of Troy* from the *Story of the Trojan War*. Tapestry design attributed to the Coëtivy Master, woven in the Netherlands, probably Tournai, between ca. 1475 and ca. 1495. Wool and silk, 477 x 942 cm. Museo Catedralicio, Zamora



line of helmets and the piles of bodies behind them with much more specific brutal details of the sack of the city, for example, the woman being put to death above the head of the horse.

The elaboration of this area of the tapestry also relates to the second reason that many changes appear to have been introduced between the drawings and the final cartoons: the need to accommodate the design to the tapestry medium. Although the artist responsible for the drawings has taken care to provide an image that fills the whole surface of the design, the narrative emphasis is frequently located in the lower area of the composition. In contrast, the cartoonists seem to have gone to great lengths to integrate the lower half of the designs with the upper areas, utilizing a variety of devices to do so. Generally speaking, the foreground figures have been made taller, and the vertical elements of the drawings, such as architectural features and spears, have often been lengthened and augmented. Both these effects are readily apparent when the drawings and tapestries of the two designs featured here are compared (fig. 30 with cat. no. 2; cat. no. 3 with fig. 37). In addition, as Cavallo has shown, the cartoonists frequently compacted the upper and lower registers of the designs, so that the foreground scenes overlap those above.<sup>15</sup>

Closely related to this shift is the way in which the cartoonists developed the surface pattern of the design while deemphasizing any sense of spatial illusion. As comparison between the drawing and tapestry of the *Sack of Troy* demonstrates, the decorative detailing in the latter was largely introduced at the cartoon stage. Whereas the costumes of the figures and the horse in the drawing are plain, those in the tapestry are decorated in rich brocades. The sumptuous patterning added in the cartoon stage underscored the flattened, frieze-like effect of the final design, readily evident when one compares the section of the drawing showing the slaying of Polyxena with that in the tapestry. In the drawing, the figure kneels in the foreground of an area that is defined by the broken-down walls and rubble behind her and the strong diagonal of the tomb on which she kneels. In the tapestry, the perspectival illusion is reduced by the strong linear emphasis of the mortar between the stones in the city walls and the pattern on Polyxena's dress. This shift of emphasis, like those mentioned above, keeps

the eye moving across the patterned surface of the tapestry, rather than lingering and exploring spatial depth.

The third type of change relates to corrections to the narrative detail. For example, in the drawing for the eighth design (fig. 30), the body of Troilus dragged behind Hector's horse is shown complete, with the head still attached—a bit jarring in view of the grisly decapitation taking place above. In contrast, it is shown headless, following the sources, in the Zamora tapestry.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in the drawing for the final scene, Priam is shown being killed in front of a statue of a female god, not a male one, which is incongruous given that the temple is dedicated to Apollo. Again, this detail has been corrected in the final tapestry.<sup>17</sup> Both changes indicate that the *modelli* were subject to a rigorous inspection by a learned advisor, presumably the author of the program, before their final enlargement into cartoon form. Another detail provides a change that is less easy to explain. Where the drawing shows the fleeing Hecuba and Polyxena in an encounter with Aeneas, according to the written sources, the accompanying inscription in the tapestry indicates that they meet Antenor. Why this mistake should have been introduced is unclear. McKendrick suggests that it may reflect the cartoonists changing the design to conform with the inscriptions provided to them. Whether the divergence of the inscription from the principal texts indicates a mistake by the intellectual who devised the program or the use of an older text is unclear, but many of the inscriptions refer only to part of the narrative depicted below, which has led McKendrick to speculate that the deviser of the program may have utilized an existing text, possibly inscriptions from an older set of tapestries.<sup>18</sup>

Although most commentators have assumed that the drawings were the final designs, the foregoing divergences led McKendrick to propose that they represented a stage in the preparatory process that was subsequently subjected to punctilious correction under expert direction. Reynaud has taken issue with this theory, questioning whether a set of preparatory drawings would have survived, and hypothesizing that these must rather have been the final *modelli*, corrected in the cartoon stage. Considering the complexity of the design and the care with which color has been used to enliven the

images, the drawings were clearly valued. It thus seems reasonable to suggest that changes were developed from corrected drawings for the details in question, and that the surviving drawings are as close to a final set of drawings as the artist came. The fact that the drawings incorporated a number of mistakes does not exclude the possibility that they could have been used as presentation pieces to subsequent patrons, as McKendrick has suggested. Although medieval patrons expected tapestry merchants and weavers to adhere to the cartoons with great care, the changes between the finished designs and the drawings might easily have been explained to a potential patron verbally or with supplementary drawings. All said, we simply know too little of contemporary workshop practice to be dogmatic on this issue. It is quite conceivable that a large workshop such as that operated by the successful Coëtivy Master may have employed sufficient numbers of artists to produce adapted and corrected versions of the design. As both Reynaud and McKendrick have noted, the stylistic differences in execution between the various drawings certainly indicate that at least two artists were involved in the production of the drawings.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Cartoons and Later Weavings*

If the *Story of the Trojan War* series was a commission from a member of the French court (rather than an entrepreneurial venture by Pasquier Grenier), it is evident that the cartoons must have been executed after the preparatory drawings by the Coëtivy Master under the direction of Pasquier Grenier, and that they subsequently remained his property. An analogous situation is provided by the dealings between Giovanni de' Medici and the merchant Pierre de Los of Lille, when Giovanni's agent explained that it was normal practice for the cartoons to remain in the possession of the merchant unless the patron paid an additional sum.

Whatever the circumstances of their creation, the *Trojan War* cartoons provided Grenier with a design series that enjoyed as much, or more, popularity as the *Story of Alexander* series during the late 1450s and 1460s. Assuming that Charles the Bold's set had been completed by 1472, it seems likely that another speculative set was begun shortly afterward, because in 1476 Jean Grenier supplied a set to Federico da

Montefeltro, duke of Urbino. The next documented sale was in 1488, when Jean Grenier was paid for delivering an eleven-piece set of the same subject to Henry VII (two years earlier Pasquier and Jean had been granted a license to import tapestries into England; this later payment presumably reflects the result of a commission established two years before). The twelve-year gap between the documented delivery to Federico and that to Henry should not be taken as a hiatus in production. On the contrary, evidence of the same design series in a number of other collections by the early 1490s and in others by the end of the decade suggests that Grenier's *Trojan War* cartoons must have been in constant production from the early 1470s until well into the late 1490s. As we have seen, another set is listed in the French royal collection by 1494, while others are recorded in the Hungarian royal collection in 1495 (said to have been acquired by Matthias Corvinus, who died in 1490) and in that of Ludovico Sforza, il Moro (the latter set was lent to the emperor Maximilian for his entry into Genoa in September 1496). Finally, another set is listed in the collection of James IV of Scotland by 1503.<sup>20</sup> On the basis of comparison between the extant duplicate fragments and the documentary evidence, McKendrick has estimated that there may have been as many as nine different weavings of this design series.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Place of Manufacture*

Pasquier Grenier lived and worked in Tournai, and based on the assumption that he was a merchant-weaver, most early tapestry historians took the link between his name and the documented sets of the *Story of the Trojan War* tapestries as evidence that they were woven in

the town. Even with the recognition that Grenier was actually a rich merchant, rather than a hands-on weaver, this assumption remained current until it was challenged in 1993 by Cavallo on the grounds that, without specific documentation, the portability of designs and weavers and the flexibility of trade relations allowed weaving in a variety of centers. As we have seen (pp. 31–32, 34), while Cavallo's contention was certainly true for small-scale and lower-quality production, this paradigm does not seem appropriate for the Grenier production. The *Trojan War* tapestries were of such size, the sets produced with such speed, and the consistency of weaving quality and materials so marked that it seems certain that they were produced in a number of large, reliable shops working in close proximity to the Grenier family's base of operation. Given the nature of guild regulations at this time and the influential role that Grenier played within the town of Tournai, it is logical to suppose that these workshops were, for the main part, either in Tournai or in its close environs.

#### *Patron of the Zamora Set*

The four Zamora tapestries carry a coat of arms that was used by Don Íñigo López de Mendoza, second count of Tendilla and first marquis of Mondéjar, and it has generally been assumed that they are his, although McKendrick has noted that the arms also appear to have been utilized by the third marquis.<sup>22</sup> However, the red dye used in the arms appears to be different from that used in the main field of the tapestries, and it has therefore been generally assumed that the arms are not original to the tapestries. Writing in 1919, Gómez-Moreno suggested that these tapestries may have been among the "tap-

estries, brocades, silks and other things" that Ferdinand I, king of Naples, sent to the first marquis in 1486 as a reward for the role that he had played in negotiating a peace with Pope Innocent VIII, a hypothesis that was endorsed by Souchal's entry in the 1973 Paris exhibition catalogue.<sup>23</sup> While plausible, no documentation has emerged to support this theory, and it needs to be treated with some skepticism. No inventory of Mendoza's possessions has survived, but they appear to have been sold following his death to pay his debts, as was then the custom. It is therefore conceivable that this sale provided the occasion at which an ancestor of the sixth count of Aliste and Alba acquired the set.

1. Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 59–60; McKendrick 1991, pp. 62–63.
2. McKendrick 1991, pp. 49–50.
3. Reynaud in Paris 1993, p. 66; Cavallo 1993, pp. 241–42.
4. Reynaud 1973, pp. 14–15.
5. McKendrick 1991, pp. 48–49.
6. Reynaud 1973; McKendrick 1991, p. 81.
7. Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 14–19.
8. Lugt 1968, pp. 17–19; Hébert 1976; Reynaud in Paris 1993, pp. 64–66.
9. Reynaud 1973; Reynaud in Paris 1993, pp. 58–59.
10. Reynaud 1973.
11. Ibid., pp. 14–16.
12. Asselberghs 1970, pp. 157–61; McKendrick 1991.
13. McKendrick 1991, pp. 78–79.
14. Ibid., pp. 68–73; Cavallo 1993, p. 240; Reynaud in Paris 1993, p. 66.
15. Cavallo 1993, pp. 42–43.
16. McKendrick 1991, pp. 70–71.
17. Ibid., p. 71.
18. Ibid., p. 69.
19. Reynaud in Paris 1993, p. 66; McKendrick 1991, pp. 71–73.
20. McKendrick 1991, pp. 51–55, 58.
21. Ibid., p. 77.
22. Ibid., pp. 62–63, n. 144.
23. "[T]apisseries, brocarts, soies et autres choses"; Gómez-Moreno 1919, p. 268; Souchal in Paris 1973, p. 59.



#### 4.

### *The Franciscan Tree*

(also known as the *Tapestry of Sixtus IV*)

Designer unknown, between 1471 and 1482  
Woven in the Netherlands, possibly Brussels,  
between 1471 and 1482; extensive restoration and  
reweaving, 1950s  
Wool and silk  
445 x 333 cm (14 ft. 7¼ in. x 10 ft. 11⅞ in.)  
7 warps per cm  
Museo-Tesoro e Collezione Perkins, Assisi  
(*not in exhibition*)

PROVENANCE: 1479, according to tradition, given to  
the Basilica di San Francesco, Assisi, by Pope Sixtus IV.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCES: G. Cristofani in Gnoli 1908, pp. 86–87;  
Marinangeli 1914; Kleinschmidt 1915, p. 299; Viale Ferrero  
1980 (with bibliog.); Viale Ferrero 1982, pp. 125–26; Forti  
Grazzini 1990a, p. 38; P. Lurati in Paris, New York, and  
San Francisco 1999, pp. 152–53; Meoni 2002.

CONDITION: At first publication, 1908, tapestry was  
stated to be in good condition, but that photograph and  
the ones published in 1914 and 1915 appear to show con-  
siderable wear in the figures' faces.<sup>2</sup> Lower edge of tap-  
estry also cut, eliminating bottom of armorial. Tapestry  
consigned to the Tapestry Laboratory of the Vatican  
Museums, 1954–58, due to poor condition. All silk  
replaced. About 8 cm added to lower edge and about  
5 cm to either side.<sup>3</sup> Visual examination of tapestry sur-  
face indicates very extensive restoration also through-  
out woolen areas to the extent that it is difficult to  
distinguish between original and modern material.

One of the very few extant examples of the  
many Netherlandish tapestries that were  
exported to Italy during the fifteenth century,  
this piece is of additional interest because it is  
one of only two (the other being the Nardini  
*Passion* antependium, cat. no. 1) to include a  
portrait of a fifteenth-century personage, in this  
case, Sixtus IV, a major patron of the arts. The  
design is also of exceptional interest for its idio-  
syncratic and complex iconography, which  
relates to doctrinal debates that were occupying  
the Catholic Church at the time. The present  
appearance of the tapestry owes much to  
extensive restoration in Rome during the 1950s,  
but the tapestry still provides a vivid demon-  
stration of the type of tapestries that eminent  
Italian patrons were commissioning from the  
Netherlands in the late fifteenth century.

#### *Description and Iconography*

The tapestry is divided into two distinct areas,  
corresponding to the lower and upper halves of

the design. In the upper center of the tapestry,  
Saint Francis (1181/82–1226), in the brown habit  
of his order, is receiving the stigmata. According  
to legend, after forty days of fasting on Mount  
Alverno, Francis had a vision of a seraph nailed  
to a cross in the rays of the rising sun and, as  
the vision faded, he discovered the wounds of  
the crucified Christ on his own body. The sub-  
ject was frequently represented in medieval art,  
and the tapestry follows visual convention in  
connecting Christ's wounds to the stigmata  
with red lines. Francis is represented in front  
of the roots and lower trunk of a tree that is  
embraced by a baldachin, whose canopy carries  
the inscription *TRES · ORDINES · HIC · ORDINAT*  
(He establishes three orders). Above and below,  
the tree branches out into curvaceous limbs  
and scrolling leaves that lead to six opulent  
flowers, with white and red petals that form  
seats for six Franciscan saints, each identified by  
an inscription and each in the brown habit of the  
order.<sup>4</sup> To the right (Francis's left), we see Saint  
Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444), with the radi-  
ant monogram of Christ (IHS) that he displayed  
while preaching, and three miters representing  
the bishoprics that his devout Franciscan prac-  
tice led him to reject; Saint Antony of Padua  
(1195–1231), with the cross and lantern, symbolic  
of spiritual enlightenment, that he used to  
repulse the demon who appears at his feet; and  
Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231), who  
holds a cloak in one hand, symbolic of the  
worldly goods that she gave away in charity, and  
three crowns in the other, symbolizing her royal  
status as virgin, wife, and widow. She wears the  
white habit of penitence. To the left are Saint  
Louis of Toulouse (d. 1297), whose cloak deco-  
rated with fleurs-de-lis and crown poised on the  
branch next to him refer to the throne of Naples  
that he is said to have renounced in order to  
become a priest; Clare (1194–1253), foundress of  
the Second Franciscan Order, the Poor Clares  
(Franciscan nuns), with the monstrance with  
which she drove the Saracens out of Assisi dur-  
ing the siege by Emperor Frederick II's forces  
in 1244; and Elzear (1285–1323), who holds a  
sword in one hand, symbolic of his aristocratic  
origins, and a rosary of white and red beads in

the other. Above the canopy, the uppermost  
branch of the tree leads to a petal-like cloud  
that cradles an aureole in which the Virgin and  
Christ child appear. The Virgin holds an apple  
and Christ holds a pomegranate, commonly  
used in medieval art as symbols for, respectively,  
original sin and redemption.

Where the field of the upper section of the  
tapestry is dominated by the scrolling leaves of  
the Franciscan tree, the lower section depicts  
five ecclesiastical figures against a millefleurs  
ground.<sup>5</sup> The central figure, Sixtus IV (general  
of the Order of Friars Minor from 1464 and pope  
from 1471 to 1484), wears a sumptuous cloth-of-  
gold cope with pearl- and jewel-encrusted  
orphreys and a brocaded green velvet dalmatic,  
over the habit of the Franciscan order. He is  
crowned with a pearl-encrusted papal miter and  
holds a papal cross in one hand, while he clasps  
a closed book, presumably the Holy Scriptures,  
under his left arm. Beneath his feet appears the  
coat of arms of the della Rovere family against  
the crossed keys of the papacy. He is flanked by  
two other Franciscan popes, who also carry  
ecclesiastical crosses, and wear similarly elabo-  
rate vestments over the habits of the order:  
Nicholas IV (general of the Franciscan order  
from 1274, and pope 1288–92) and Alexander V  
(antipope 1409–10). Nicholas extends his left  
hand, on which a stigma is visible, while  
Alexander holds an open book. This group is  
flanked by two doctors of the church, who  
also wear the order's habits beneath the robes  
and hat traditionally associated with a cardinal's  
station: Bonaventura (1221–1274) on the left,  
and Pietro Auriolo (archbishop of Aix from  
1318; d. 1322) on the right.

#### *Iconography*

As Viale Ferrero demonstrated in the first  
detailed study of this tapestry, the iconographic  
program derives from a visual tradition that had  
been inspired by Bonaventura's treatise *Lignum  
vitae* (ca. 1257–74), which envisaged the cross  
on which Christ was crucified as a living tree.<sup>6</sup>  
The concept was well established in Franciscan  
iconography, as demonstrated, for example, by  
a fresco (ca. 1340) in the refectory of the church

of Santa Croce in Florence. Attributed to Taddeo Gaddi, it figures the genealogy of the Franciscan order, with Saint Francis embracing the cross at its base, and is specifically identified as a *lignum vitae*, with evangelists and prophets in the branches.<sup>7</sup> In the tapestry, the conceit is used as the basis of an image that celebrates the Franciscan order as the fruit of Christ's Passion and Sixtus IV as heir and champion of the order.

The careful planning underlying the program of the tapestry is reflected in the numerical pattern implicit in the choice of figures represented, which is based on the number three, symbolizing the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The tapestry includes three Franciscan popes, three doctors of the church, six Franciscan saints, and three divine figures—the seraphic Christ, the Virgin, and the Christ child. In total there are fifteen figures in the image, the number of beads in the rosary, and the number of Stations of the Cross. Yet, if the number of figures was partly determined by an intention to embody a numerological harmony, the idiosyncratic nature of the selection also reflects the interests of the program's author with various issues that were of direct concern to the Franciscan order at the time the tapestry was designed. Indeed, the choice of personages appears to reflect a specific partisan program.

Even within Francis's lifetime, the order he created was subjected to an internal debate between those who sought to apply the rigorous asceticism of their founder and those who sought a more moderate path. In the course of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, continuing tensions resulted in the development of various sects within the main order, and ongoing doctrinal conflict. As Viale Ferrero has observed, the *Franciscan Tree* tapestry appears to have been conceived, in part, with the intent of demonstrating the common origin of the Franciscan order. First, and most important, the association of Saint Francis with the roots of the Franciscan tree and the inscription on the baldachin provide a reminder of the common source of the Franciscan movement, a theme that is underscored by the embrace of the canopy, in this case a symbol of unity. Second, the choice of figures also appears to have been made with a view to demonstrating the diversity of the Franciscan brotherhood,

including not only representatives of the three orders instituted by Francis—the Friars Minor, the Poor Clares, and the Tertiaries (lay members sympathetic to the aims of the Franciscan movement)—but also Bernardino of Siena, one of the chief promoters of the strict branch called the Observants (founded in the 1370s), and Pietro Auriolo, whose *Tractatus de paupertate et usu papere* (1311) was written as an attack on the extreme spiritualists within the movement. A similar care is reflected in the choice of the other figures, which include a queen, a royal prince who rejected his crown, and an aristocrat, whose highborn origins contrasted with the humble background of Sixtus IV himself. Similarly, the spectrum of the church is also carefully represented, including a bishop, Louis of Toulouse, but also the man who rejected a bishopric—Bernardino of Siena. This eclectic selection of representatives are all presented as the fruit of the tree that stems from Francis.

Further evidence of the theme of unity is provided by the inclusion of Bonaventura, general of the Franciscan order from 1256 to 1274, one of the most esteemed doctors of the Catholic Church, and an especially topical figure within the reign of Sixtus IV. His success in mitigating, for a while at least, tensions between the extremists and the moderates within the order led to his being called the "Second Founder," but his canonization was delayed by dissension within the movement. It gained new momentum from 1434 when his remains were translated and his head was found to be uncorrupted, but it was not until 1482 that he was canonized by Sixtus IV.

If the unity of the Franciscan order was one underlying theme of the iconographic program, a second, more partisan theme is suggested by the rosary of white and red beads or roses (joyful and sorrowful mysteries) held by Saint Elzear. The cult of the rosary enjoyed rapid dissemination during the third quarter of the fifteenth century, largely in the hands of Dominicans, and it was a Dominican, Jacob Sprenger, the grand inquisitor in Germany, who founded the first Confraternity of the Rosary at Cologne in 1475, a society that spread rapidly and was especially privileged by Sixtus IV. The representation of this primitive form of the rosary in the hands of a Franciscan who lived more than a century and a half earlier must therefore have been intended to champion the

Franciscan claim to precedence in the dissemination of the cult of Mary, an issue that was of great personal interest to Sixtus IV.

As will be readily apparent, the choice of figures and sophistication of the iconography indicate that the program was devised by a learned member of the Franciscan order, which lends credence to Viale Ferrero's suggestion that in this case the millefleurs ground may have had a symbolic, rather than merely decorative, role. As already noted, the Virgin and child are represented with an apple and a pomegranate, commonly used in medieval art as symbols for original sin and redemption. Citing Pseudo-Bonaventura's invocation of Christ's wounds as the flowers above which the soul must hover like a butterfly, Viale Ferrero suggested that the millefleurs ground in the lower part of the tapestry symbolized both the Garden of Eden, from which humanity was expelled because of original sin, and the Garden of Paradise, gained through Christ's sacrifice, a suggestion that gains credence from an analogous symbolic usage of a millefleurs ground in the heraldic millefleurs that Jehan de Haze sold to Philip the Good in 1466.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Patron and Date*

The tapestry is traditionally said to have been a gift from Sixtus IV to the Basilica di San Francesco, and, although no documentation has yet been found to support this claim, it is certainly a strong possibility, as Sixtus made many other generous gifts to the basilica, including a sumptuous parament that depicted him kneeling in front of Saint Francis.<sup>9</sup> Sixtus's baptismal name was Francesco and he attributed the progress of his ecclesiastical career to the intercession of Francis. He entered the Franciscan order at an early age and rose to be the general of the order in 1464. Following his election as pope in 1471 he maintained close links with the order and legislated considerable concessions and privileges in its favor.<sup>10</sup> In 1474, he issued a bull that greatly augmented the privileges of the Franciscan Conventuals, a faction of the Observant movement to which Sixtus himself belonged, and he seems to have sought the reunion of the Franciscan Conventuals and the Observants, through subjection of the latter, which resulted in great concern and lobbying by its supporters. The partiality of Sixtus for his own order











must have contributed to the canonization of Bonaventura, celebrated with much solemnity in Rome on April 14, 1482.<sup>11</sup>

If Sixtus is one obvious candidate as the patron of the tapestry, it is also possible that it was woven as a gift for the pope, and that he subsequently donated it to the Basilica di San Francesco.<sup>12</sup>

The tapestry must have been designed after 1471, the date of Sixtus's election as pope, and before 1482, the date at which Bonaventura, depicted as a doctor of the church in the tapestry, was canonized. Within these parameters, it seems likely that the creation of the tapestry may have been related to the celebrations in 1476 and 1478 of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversaries of, respectively, the death and canonization of Francis.

#### *Style of Design and Place of Manufacture*

When the tapestry was first published by Cristofani in 1908, she recognized its Northern character and suggested that it might have been woven in France. In fuller considerations of the piece published in 1914 and 1915, Marinangeli and Kleinschmidt refined this supposition by suggesting that it could have been woven either by Netherlandish weavers at the court of Sixtus IV or, more probably in view of the character of the design, in northern Europe.<sup>13</sup> Recent critics have tended to agree with the latter suggestion. Viale Ferrero suggested that it might have been made in Brussels, on the basis of stylistic analogies between the figures represented in the tapestry and those in contemporary Brussels sculptures and paintings, but noted that Bruges and Lille were equally likely because of well-documented links between Italian patrons and these centers via the Medici representatives. Subsequently, Forti Grazzini has also reiterated a possible link with Brussels on the basis of the analogy between the millefleurs ground of this piece and that of the heraldic millefleurs supplied by de Haze to Philip the Good in 1466 (not convincing because the latter may have been made in Lille) and the fact that the Brussels tapestry industry was in the ascendant during the reign of Sixtus IV. While the latter observation is certainly true, Viale Ferrero was correct to strike a note of caution in noting that a single panel like this could have been produced in a

high-quality workshop in Lille, Bruges, or Tournai, just as easily as in Brussels.

If we are unlikely to establish a place of manufacture on the basis of style and technique (especially in view of the radical conservation of the 1950s), the stylistic link between figures in the Assisi tapestry and those in various works of art produced in Brussels during the late fifteenth century is nonetheless of interest. Viale Ferrero noted the resemblance with figures in a retable in the cathedral of Strängnäs, Sweden, now attributed to the workshop of Colyn de Coter, and this likeness can be expanded with reference to other works attributed to his workshop, particularly the retable in the church of Vadstena, also in Sweden (fig. 38), and certain panels in the *Legend of Rombaut* cycle (Cathedral of Saint Rombaut, Mechelen).<sup>14</sup> There are also marked resemblances to a figure type that appears in a number of high-quality, late fifteenth-century tapestries such as the *Miraculous Mass of Saint Gregory* (cat. no. 12), thought to have been produced in Brussels workshops working for Pieter van Aelst during the 1490s and early 1500s, also from cartoons by Colyn de Coter, or an artist in his circle. While the role that de Coter played in relationship to tapestry design has only recently come into question and requires further analysis, it seems reasonable to suppose that an important commission like this may well have involved an artist of de Coter's caliber for the models of the principal figures, while the decorative ground and aggrandized figures would have been executed by a cartoon specialist.

As Viale Ferrero has noted, the portrait of Sixtus IV does not conform to known portraits of this pope. While this may be due in part to restoration and reweaving, it also suggests that the design and cartoon of the tapestry were developed in the Netherlands from a written program, rather than a detailed Italian design. While the iconographic program of the *lignum vitae* was of Italian origin, the terms in which the conceit was realized appear to be entirely dependent on northern European models, particularly representations of the genealogy of the Virgin and the Tree of Jesse. These subjects were realized in a number of northern European engravings and woodcuts during the second half of the fifteenth century and evidently provided the immediate visual sources for the composition of the Assisi tapestry (fig. 39).<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 38. *Glorification of the Virgin*. Altarpiece; panel paintings attributed to the workshop or circle of Colyn de Coter, predella painting attributed to Jan van Coninxloo or his circle, carvings by the workshop of Jan Borman; Brussels, ca. 1520. Oak, 380 x 227 x 34 cm. Vadstena, Sweden



Fig. 39. *Genealogy of the Virgin*. Engraving by Master W of the Key (fl. ca. 1465–85). 41.5 x 27.6 cm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

## 5.

### *The Unicorn Defends Itself*

(traditionally known as the *Unicorn at Bay*)

1. Viale Ferrero 1980, p. 161.
2. G. Cristofani in Gnoli 1908, pp. 86–87; Marinangeli 1914; Kleinschmidt 1915, p. 299.
3. Information from the 1954–58 conservation report kindly communicated by Anna Maria De Strobel, letter to the author, September 1, 1999.
4. *S bernardinus de sinis, S antonie de Padua, Sâ elisabet, S ludowicus epus tolosanus, Sâ clara, S elzarri-comes.*
5. *Sixtus iiiii, Nicolaus quatus papa, Alexander.QUITUS, Bonaüenturâ doctor.sêaphicus, petrus aureoli.*
6. Viale Ferrero 1980, pp. 161–65; P. Lurati in Paris, New York, and San Francisco 1999, p. 152.
7. Esmeijer 1985.
8. Viale Ferrero 1980, p. 163; Deuchler 1984, pp. 21–24.
9. P. Lurati in Paris, New York, and San Francisco 1999, pp. 154–56.
10. Pastor 1936–61, vol. 4, pp. 389–431.
11. Ibid., p. 392.
12. Viale Ferrero 1980, p. 159; Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 38.
13. G. Cristofani in Gnoli 1908, pp. 86–87; Marinangeli 1914; Kleinschmidt 1915, p. 299.
14. Périer-D’Ieteren 1984, pp. 159, 205.
15. Kurth 1948; Viale Ferrero 1980, pp. 161–63.

From a set of four or more pieces among seven associated tapestries of the *Hunt of the Unicorn* as an allegory of the Passion of Christ  
Design and cartoon attributed to the Paris workshop of the Master of the *Très petites heures* of Anne of Brittany  
Woven in the Netherlands, unknown workshop, ca. 1495–1505  
Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
368 x 401 cm (12 ft. 7/8 in. x 13 ft. 1 1/8 in.)  
6–7 1/4 warps per cm  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.4)

PROVENANCE: 1680, seven tapestries “representing a unicorn hunt” recorded in inventory taken after death of François VI de La Rochefoucauld at his Paris town house; before 1728, transferred to the family château, Verteuil (Angoulême), where they were listed following the death of François VIII de La Rochefoucauld; 1793, looted from the La Rochefoucauld family; early 1850s, reacquired by the family and restored and hanging in the salon of the château by 1856; 1922, six pieces exhibited by Édouard Larcade at the Anderson Galleries, New York; 1923, acquired by John D. Rockefeller Jr. and installed in his Fifty-fourth Street residence; 1937, transferred to a specially built gallery at The Cloisters, along with two fragments of the seventh tapestry, the *Mystic Hunt*, which had been acquired independently by the Metropolitan Museum from a descendant of the La Rochefoucauld family.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCES: Rorimer 1938; Rorimer 1942; Rorimer 1945; Souchal 1973; Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 76–86; Souchal in New York 1974, pp. 69–79; Erlande-Brandenburg 1975; Freeman 1976; Cavallo 1993, pp. 297–327 (with bibliog.); Reynaud in Paris 1993, pp. 265–70; Cavallo 1998.

CONDITION: Comparison of dimensions of the seven *Unicorn* tapestries between 1680 and today indicates a loss of about 114 cm in height and an overall loss in width of just under 488 cm (much of which can be accounted for by the loss of more than half the width of the *Mystic Hunt of the Unicorn*).<sup>2</sup> In a 1728 inventory at Verteuil, five pieces hanging in the “large bedroom of the new building” were recorded as half worn-out; two others, in storage, were said to have many holes. The tapestries were conserved following their reacquisition by the La Rochefoucauld family in the early 1850s, and possibly at this date the damaged sections of sky were removed. Woven and dyed material now replacing the sky was added at the Metropolitan Museum in 1938. Otherwise the tapestry is in good

condition. Although some of the silks are faded, especially the lighter blues and yellows, as demonstrated by comparing the front to the back of the tapestry, where the colors have survived in a fresh state of repair, the overall harmony of colors and the color balance are well preserved.

With their haunting subject matter and resonant symbolic content, the seven *Unicorn* tapestries now at The Cloisters have intrigued scholars and the general public since they were rediscovered in the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet, despite the publication of several major studies over the years, many questions about their origin and meaning remain unanswered. It has long been accepted that they may derive from at least two different sets, and more recently it has been suggested that they may come from as many as four separate ensembles, but there is uncertainty over the relationship of these groups and the exact meaning of the symbolic programs they embody. Furthermore, although much effort has been expended in attempts to explain the AE ciphers that appear throughout the tapestries and to identify the coat of arms that appears in one, we still do not know for whom or where they were made. Dated between about 1495 and 1505 largely on the basis of the costumes depicted, the style of design is closely related to that of manuscript illuminations and book illustrations produced in Paris during the 1490s in the workshop of an anonymous artist known as the Master of the *Très petites heures* of Anne of Brittany, and it has been proposed that this artist was responsible for both the design and the cartoons. The quality of the weaving and the constituent materials invite comparison with the high-quality production that was increasingly found in Brussels at this date. The Parisian character of the design, similar ciphers on other panels made for French patrons, and the documented presence of the tapestries in Paris in 1680 have led to the assumption that the set was commissioned by a French patron.

#### *Description*

Following scenes of the hunters discovering the unicorn (fig. 34) and the unicorn attempting to





5

escape from his pursuers by jumping into a stream, this tapestry represents a violent struggle between the hunters and the unicorn. The foreground is occupied by a stream that provides a visual link to the preceding panels. On the near side a hunter and two hounds rush toward a clearing in a wooded thicket, where

the unicorn has been surrounded. The unicorn is shown in profile, its body forming a strong diagonal in the center of the composition as it lunges down to gore a hound with its horn, kicking out at the same time with its rear legs at the hunter behind it. The unicorn is bleeding from a wound on its back, while a hound is

drawing fresh blood from the unicorn's front right leg. All the dogs wear wide collars, some embossed with studs or cinquefoils, others carrying the letters A and E linked by a cord. The collar of the dog in the left foreground carries an inscription, OFANCRE, that has been read as "O francorum rex." In the left foreground





Detail of cat. no. 5

another hunter is sounding his horn. His scabbard carries the inscription AVE · REGINA · C. Above the main group in the upper right corner a hunter is letting slip another hound, as another man, distinguished by a feather in his hat, regards the scene calmly. All the hunters are clothed in boots, hose, and short jerkins made from brightly colored, sumptuous materials—cloth of gold, velvet, and moiré silk. To the upper left, a woodsman is directing a peasant toward the scene of the hunt. The latter carries a jug and a spear over his shoulder with what appears to be a loaf of bread stuck on the end. An apple tree rises in the upper center of the scene. The loops of a cord slung over the lower branch embrace the letters A and E, the same as those on the dog collars. Above the figures and treetops a hillside is visible in the middle

distance, crowned by a castle. Beyond this, beneath a blue sky, is a distant vista.

#### *Iconography and Relationship of the Different Tapestries*

The *Unicorn Defends Itself* is one of seven tapestries that are known to have been associated as a group since at least 1680, when they were recorded together in the Paris town house of François de La Rochefoucauld. In the order in which they have traditionally been displayed, they represent the following: the *Start of the Hunt* (three courtly figures, accompanied by two servants and hounds embarking on a hunt); the *Unicorn Is Found* (a large group of huntsmen watch as a unicorn dips its horn into a stream; fig. 34); the *Unicorn Leaps across a Stream* (in its attempt to escape its pursuers); the *Unicorn Defends Itself*

(cat. no. 5); two fragments representing less than half the original fabric of a panel known as the *Mystic Hunt of the Unicorn* (the unicorn appears to be resting by a lady whose hand is on its neck, as a second lady signals to the hunters to draw close; fig. 41); the *Unicorn Is Killed and Brought to the Castle* (fig. 42); and the *Unicorn in Captivity* (the unicorn is tethered to a pomegranate tree by a gold chain within a fenced enclosure; fig. 43). Two of these panels, the *Start of the Hunt* and the *Unicorn in Captivity*, take place against an all-over, millefleurs ground, while the other five appear against grounds that, although covered in flowers and plants, are conceived as landscapes with a foreground and vista in the distance beneath a sky.

Critics have long recognized that beneath the ostensible narrative, the *Unicorn* tapestries



carry a symbolic message. Writing in 1923, Ackerman identified the underlying concept when she noted that the taming of the unicorn by a lady was widely understood during the medieval era as a metaphor for the Incarnation of Christ through Mary. As she subsequently stated, according to medieval legend, the unicorn's horn was an antidote to poison and a general panacea, but it was immensely rare because no ordinary hunter could catch it. The only way it could be trapped was with the lure of a virgin, to whom the unicorn would yield itself, laying its head in her lap, at which point it could be seized. This ancient legend had been imbued with religious significance during the medieval era when the unicorn came to be interpreted as Christ, and its submission to the virgin, the Virgin Mary, as the Incarnation. As Ackerman noted, this identification forms the subject of a late fifteenth-century tapestry of the *Mystic Hunt* from the Rhine valley (fig. 40).<sup>3</sup> Ackerman was unaware of the fragments of the *Mystic Hunt* that had traditionally been associated with the *Hunt of the Unicorn* tapestries and were then still owned by a descendant of the La Rochefoucauld family. The rediscovery of these fragments provided further support for her assumption of the meaning of the tapestries.

As subsequent critics have recognized, the Christian symbolism underlying the sequence is made explicit by a number of other visual devices. The theme of Christ's Passion is introduced first in the scene where the beast dips its horn into the stream to purify the water for the animals that wait to drink. The notion that the unicorn's horn purified water was an ancient

one, but here a specifically Christian resonance is evoked by the red rosebush that grows behind the unicorn. As such, the scene reads as a metaphor for Christ's Passion, the unicorn purifying the water just as Christ's sacrifice redeemed mankind from the original sin of Adam and Eve. A second and more explicit detail linking the implicit theme of the hunt to Christ's sacrifice appears in the tapestry exhibited here, where the scabbard of the huntsman with a horn at his lips carries the inscription AVE · REGINA · C (Hail, Queen of Heaven), the opening phrase of a popular medieval hymn to the Virgin and the words with which the archangel Gabriel is traditionally said to have greeted Mary at the Annunciation. Thus, this hunter represents Gabriel, a figure who is often represented in medieval depictions of the Mystic Hunt as the hunter who drove Christ into Mary's womb (see fig. 40). The third telling detail is provided by the wreath of oak around the unicorn's neck in the final scene (fig. 43). The oak has thorns, reminiscent of those with which Christ was crowned on the cross. The lord and lady to whom the unicorn is being presented are also resonant in this context. The lady has a necklace from which a cross hangs, and in one hand she holds a rosary. She may well stand for Mary at Calvary, the man beside her for Saint John, and the three women behind for the three Marys.<sup>4</sup>

In the first Metropolitan Museum publication on the set, Rorimer (1938) acknowledged the implicit Christian symbolism of the tapestries but, noting what he took to be the secular emphasis of the narrative, suggested that it was also to be read as the celebration of a marriage

(as symbolized by the *Unicorn in Captivity*), presumably of the individual or individuals identified by the letters A and E joined by a knot that appear in each of the seven tapestries of the group. In subsequent studies he suggested first (1942) that the tapestries had been woven to celebrate the 1499 marriage of Anne of Brittany to Louis XII, and second (1945) that the stylistic divergence of the two millefleurs pieces from the other landscape *Hunts* was to be explained by the fact that they were woven later than the other five to celebrate the marriage of Anne's daughter, Claude, to Francis of Angoulême, later Francis I, in 1514 (the significance of these letters is considered below).<sup>5</sup>

Rorimer's assumption that the *Unicorn* tapestries derived from two separate groups was reiterated by Souchal when the tapestries were exhibited in Paris in 1973 and in New York in 1974, but in a seminal study of the iconography and symbolism of the tapestries published in 1976, Freeman chose to treat them as a single iconographic unit that blended metaphors of the Ministry, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ with a secular love allegory that results in the consummation of marriage. To explain the stylistic disparity among the pieces, she suggested that the millefleurs panels were created as part of a bed or canopy ensemble, en suite with the five wall hangings, and that the stylistic difference was a result of the set's being divided among designers and workshops who interpreted the designs in different ways.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent writers have tended to reject these arguments on the grounds that the reliance of weavers on detailed cartoons in this period



Fig. 40. *Mystic Hunt of the Unicorn*. Tapestry altar frontal woven in a Swiss workshop, ca. 1480. Wool, linen, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 104 x 380 cm. Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zurich

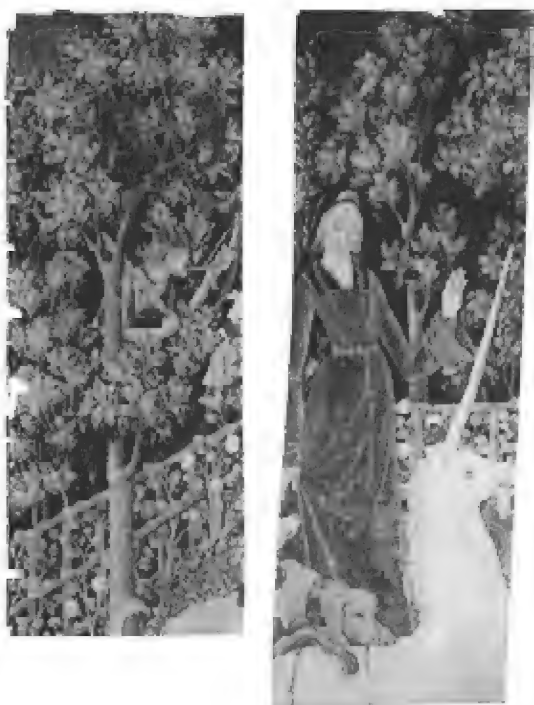


Fig. 41. Fragments from the *Mystic Hunt of the Unicorn*, probably from the *Hunt of the Unicorn*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1495–1505. Wool and silk, left 169 x 65 cm, right 199 x 65 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1938 (38.51.1, 2)

would not have resulted in a difference of interpretation along the lines that Freeman suggested, and that the dimensions of the tapestries are inappropriate for the hangings of a bed.<sup>7</sup>

A new line of inquiry regarding the relationship of the tapestries was opened by Erlande-Brandenburg in a review of the 1973 Paris exhibition. Following the traditional distinction that had also been endorsed by Souchal in the 1973 exhibition (and in New York in 1974), he agreed that the millefleurs-ground tapestries had been conceived and woven separately from the landscape-ground tapestries. In addition, Erlande-Brandenburg suggested that the five landscape *Hunts* derive from two different iconographic traditions, one concerning a hunt in which the unicorn is captured alive, the second, a hunt in which the unicorn is captured and killed. Arguing that the live capture of the unicorn in the *Mystic Hunt* obviated the need for its death, Erlande-Brandenburg proposed that this panel belonged to a separate ensemble.<sup>8</sup> This line of argument was further developed by Salet's review of Freeman's book, published in 1978. Following Erlande-Brandenburg, Salet rejected the association of the millefleurs panels with the rest of the group partly on stylistic

grounds, and partly because he knew of no other example in literature or the arts in which the captive unicorn represented the resurrected Christ. Furthermore, noting that the landscape *Hunt* panels followed the narrative development of a stag hunt, he questioned whether the intervention of the virgin in the *Mystic Hunt* was necessary. According to Salet, the hunters appeared to be quite capable of killing the unicorn without the help of a virgin, as demonstrated by the vignette of the unicorn's death in the upper corner of the *Unicorn Is Killed*.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1993 catalogue raisonné of the Metropolitan Museum's medieval tapestries, Cavallo essentially followed the line of reasoning that Erlande-Brandenburg and Salet had started. First, he agreed that the two millefleurs panels could not have been conceived and designed as an integral part of the landscape group. Rather, they may have derived from

other ensembles or have been added at an unknown date, albeit for the same patron whose cipher appears in all the tapestries. As the design of the *Unicorn in Captivity* is finer than that of the *Start of the Hunt* (which, as Salet observed, included no specific indication that it represented the start of a unicorn hunt), he agreed that the traditional assumption that these two pieces were made as part of the same ensemble was incorrect and that they in fact derived from separate ensembles.<sup>10</sup>

Cavallo also followed Erlande-Brandenburg and Salet in distinguishing the fragments of the *Mystic Hunt* from those of the other four landscape *Hunts*. In a detailed review of the previous literature and the issues involved, Cavallo concluded that the capture and taming of the live unicorn, as represented by the fragments of the *Mystic Hunt*, were redundant in this context because the hunters appear to be



Fig. 42. *The Unicorn Is Killed and Brought to the Castle* from the *Hunt of the Unicorn*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1495–1505. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 368 x 389 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.5)



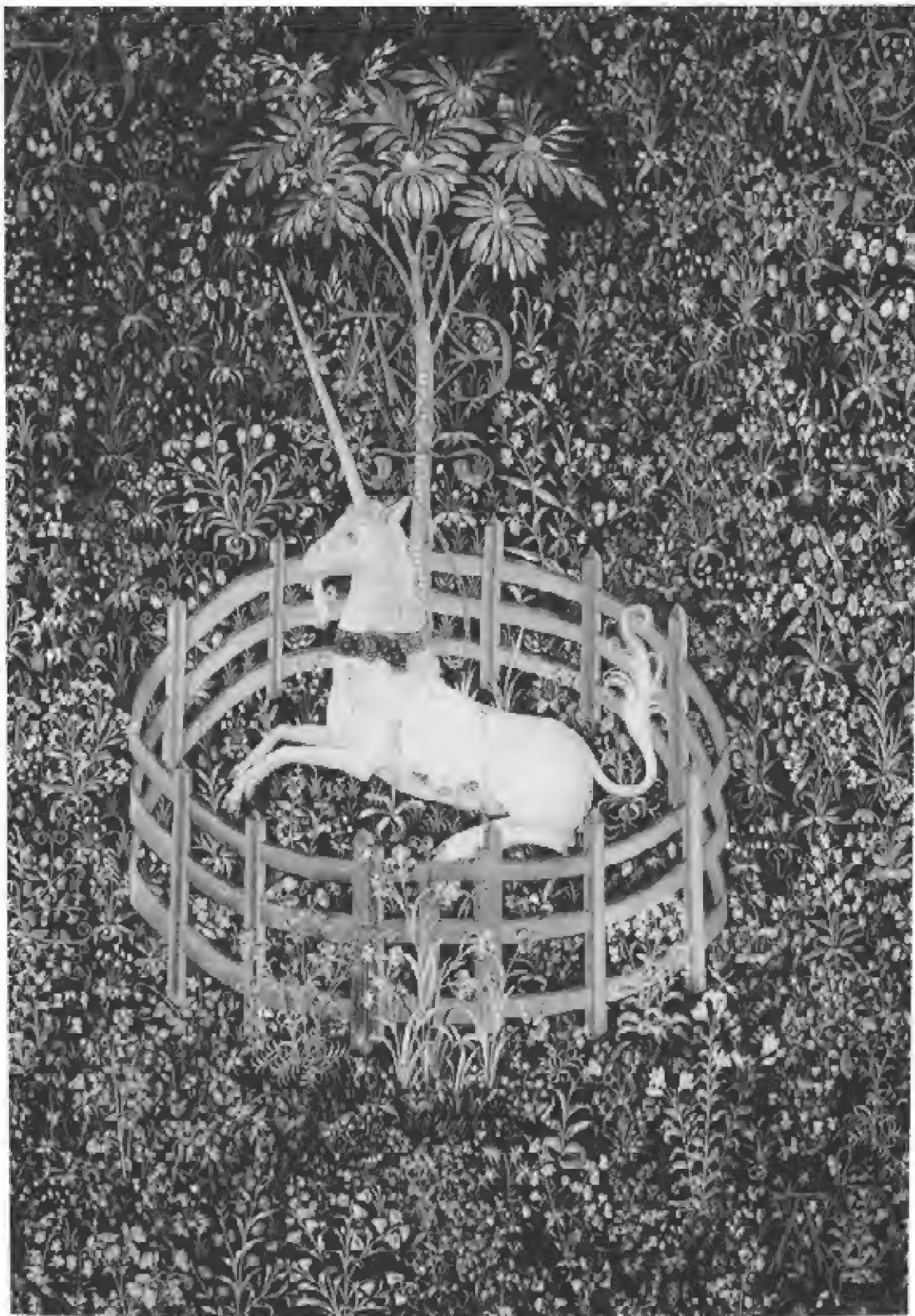


Fig. 43. *The Unicorn in Captivity* from the *Hunt of the Unicorn*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1495–1505. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 368 x 252 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.6)

about to subdue their quarry without any external aid.<sup>11</sup> Later, developing this theme, Cavallo stated, “Furthermore, we are told in a thirteenth-century encyclopedia by Thomas de Cantimpré that the Unicorn-as-Christ allows his pursuers to capture him. Why then would

these hunters cancel the hunt at this point and begin all over again by having a maiden subdue the unicorn they have already subdued?”<sup>12</sup> As further support for this argument, he noted that the guard band of the *Mystic Hunt* was woven with a thin band of orange and red,

which differed from that on the *Unicorn Is Found* (white, red, and blue), the only other panel whose border was visible at that date. (Subsequent conservation of the tapestries has revealed that the *Unicorn Defends Itself* and the *Unicorn Is Killed* are also bordered with the white, red, and gray-blue stripes.)<sup>13</sup>

The present writer believes that the separation of the *Mystic Hunt* from the rest of the sequence runs counter to all medieval literature and imagery. According to the written sources, no hunter could capture the unicorn by force of arms alone. In every case, the intercession of a virgin was central to the success of the hunt, and once the unicorn had been tamed it was invariably slaughtered by the hunters (the horn cannot be removed from a live unicorn).<sup>14</sup> This progression was also followed in the Christianized accounts of the legend. The present writer therefore believes that Cavallo’s contention that the inclusion of the *Mystic Hunt* is an “iconographical non-sequitur” is based on a subjective reading of the scene included here, colored by its traditional but misleading title, *Unicorn at Bay*. First, the analogy with the stag hunt that Salet and Cavallo cite as evidence that the *Hunt of the Unicorn* is conceived without the intervention of a virgin is probably to be explained by the fact that in developing the *Hunt of the Unicorn* as a narrative, the author-designer was heavily dependent on an existing stag-hunt model. Second, the medieval source that Cavallo cites is actually misrepresented. The question Thomas de Cantimpré posed, contrary to Cavallo, was: “What shall we understand to be signified in the unicorn, that most ferocious animal, if not Christ? . . . Who before his incarnation was furious enough to punish angels in heaven because of their pride, and men on earth because of their disobedience.” He continued to explain that no one can tame the wild beast until, venerating the beauty, virtue, and wisdom of Mary’s chaste body, the unicorn humbly bent its head into the lap of the Virgin, where “he was tamed from his ferocity and moderated in spirit to the extent that he allowed himself to be captured at the hands of the Jews and thence arising up again and ascending into heaven, in the sight of his father and the heavenly citizens, in the glory of the solemn victory by which he triumphed over the devils, he wished to be shown as an admirable spectacle.”<sup>15</sup> As will be readily apparent, far

from obviating the need for the *Mystic Hunt* panel in the *Hunt* sequence, this text demands its inclusion. In light of this evidence, it seems more reasonable to assume that the tapestry exhibited here conflates a scene that demonstrates de Cantimpré's ferocious Christ in action with a second tradition in which Gabriel is the hunter who drives the unicorn into the Virgin's lap (following texts like Ulrich Pindar's *Der beschlossenen Gart des Rosenkrantz Marie*, published in 1505).<sup>16</sup> The scene provides a poignant demonstration of Christ's divine power and of the choice he made to reject that power in becoming incarnate.

The principal scholarly objection to the reinterpolation of the *Mystic Hunt* into the *Hunt* sequence is that most medieval representations of the unicorn tamed by the Virgin show the hunters killing the unicorn as he lies with his head in the Virgin's lap, whereas in this case the unicorn is being savaged in the upper left corner of the final landscape *Hunt*. A variety of arguments can be presented to account for this deviation from the more standard iconography, although all must be conjectural. Perhaps the lost portion of the *Mystic Hunt* developed the metaphor of the betrayal of Christ, or perhaps it showed the hunters about to spear the unicorn, and the vignette in the final scene equates with Christ's suffering on the cross (in which case the hunter spearing the unicorn's side would be Longinus). Perhaps the extension of the narrative resulted from the fact that the designer was adapting an image from a preexisting stag hunt. Whatever the explanation, the important issue is surely that from a textual point of view, the narrative sequence is not as problematic as the French critics and Cavallo suggested. As de Cantimpré's text makes clear, Christ chose to make himself vulnerable by becoming incarnate, but he was not killed in the womb. Thus it is not essential to show the unicorn being killed in the Virgin's lap. Although this question undoubtedly requires further debate, it seems to the present writer to be a more satisfactory approach to the question of the relationship of the *Mystic Hunt* to the rest of the ensemble than its removal from the sequence would be. The fact that the left edge of the fragmentary panel is bordered by a guard stripe in a color different from that which survives on the four other landscape *Hunt* panels seems immaterial. Even if it is original, it

certainly does not constitute definitive proof that it was made as part of a separate campaign. On the contrary, it was evidently woven from a cartoon by the same artist as the other landscape *Hunts*, with which it demonstrates a remarkable consistency of materials and weave.

A second issue on which the present writer parts company from Erlande-Brandenburg, Salet, and Cavallo regards the interpretation and relationship of the *Unicorn in Captivity* to the rest of the sequence. In his review of Freeman's study, Salet rejected the traditional notion that this scene represents the resurrected Christ, on the grounds that the unicorn had not been represented as a resurrected being in earlier art or literature.<sup>17</sup> Although Cavallo recognized that this generalization was too sweeping and that de Cantimpré's text did in fact consider the resurrection of the unicorn, he also rejected this reading of the *Unicorn in Captivity* because the beast is shown "collared and chained, decidedly a captive in its fenced enclosure." As such, Cavallo asserted, it represents "a symbol of the lover vanquished by the god of love and held captive by his lady."<sup>18</sup> This statement, which depends on an abiding assumption that although we cannot identify the AE cipher, it probably relates in some way to the union of two historic individuals, is not convincing. As Freeman and previous writers noted, the invitation to interpret the unicorn as a symbol of Christ is surely as explicit in the *Unicorn in Captivity* as it is in the other panels. The unicorn sits beneath a pomegranate tree, a fruit that in medieval symbolism was variously interpreted as a symbol of the church, of Christ, of redemption, and of the Promised Land.<sup>19</sup> Freeman's discussion of this issue is buried in a broad survey of the potential symbolic meanings of all the plants in the set, which may explain why it has not received more consideration. But the symbolic significance of the pomegranate tree in this final scene cannot be questioned, because of the way that the juice of the pomegranates has fallen on the unicorn's flanks, mimicking the wounds of the unicorn in the earlier scenes, where they represented Christ's wounds. Following this analogy, the enclosure invites interpretation as Paradise, a setting in which the contrast between the landscape ground of five of the *Hunts* and the millefleurs ground of this piece is also subject to symbolic interpretation. As noted in the context of the *Franciscan Tree*

tapestry (cat. no. 4), the concept of the flowers as fruits of Christ's Passion—following Pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditationes*—was familiar in late medieval symbolism.

If the unicorn symbolizes the resurrected Christ in Paradise, what is to be made of the chain that links him to the tree and the omnipresent AE cipher? Following Rorimer, previous critics, including Cavallo, have tended to interpret this as a symbol of secular love. Yet, if we interpret the pomegranate tree as a symbol of the church, then the chain might equally symbolize Christ's love for mankind. In turn, this raises the possibility that the letters in the AE cipher may refer, not to a real person or to a motto, but to the first letters of the names of Adam and Eve (of course, the two possibilities are not mutually exclusive). As Cavallo and previous writers have noted, Adam and Eve were frequently portrayed in scenes of the *Mystic Hunt* (for example, in the Swiss altar frontal, Adam is actually spearing the unicorn; fig. 40), a reminder of the original sin that necessitated Christ's sacrifice. As the *Hunt of the Unicorn* was evidently conceived above all as a meditation on Christ's Passion, nothing would be more logical than that the enigmatic union to which the ubiquitous ciphers refer is that of the first parents. As we have seen, the AE cipher hangs from an apple tree in the *Unicorn Defends Itself*, reminding the viewer that Christ's incarnation was necessary in the same scene in which the Incarnation is announced by the "Gabriel" hunter.

In considering the landscape *Hunts* and the *Unicorn in Captivity* as thematically linked, the foregoing discussion returns to a more traditional reading of the relationship of the tapestries than that which has been advanced by Erlande-Brandenburg, Salet, and Cavallo. How then do we account for the stylistic divergence between the landscape- and millefleurs-ground tapestries, and the stylistic distinction between the *Start of the Hunt* and the *Unicorn in Captivity*? Although this requires more detailed discussion, a hint may be found in the heterogeneous character of the figurative components of the *Hunt* tapestries. As previous authors noted, there is no continuity of characterization between the figures in the different panels, and no hunter appears twice. Furthermore, as Souchal and Freeman have demonstrated, many of the figures are closely related to those in engravings and







woodcuts produced in Paris in the late fifteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, several of these prototypes appear to have been utilized in the composition of the *Unicorn* tapestries with little adaptation. The divergent character of the figures in these scenes may therefore result from the artist's use of workshop patterns.

The heterogeneous character of the figurative components leads to the question whether a similar process may account for the stylistic disjunction between the landscape- and millefleurs-ground tapestries. Although the *Unicorn in Captivity*, interpreted as the resurrected Christ in Paradise, follows logically from the preceding narrative, it is certainly possible that a preexisting design was adapted to provide the final piece of this sequence. Cavallo rejected the notion that this piece could have been created as a bed hanging or canopy because it is too large. But medieval inventories record many large tapestry bed hangings of similar dimensions, and the inventory of Henry VIII's possessions taken in 1547 lists a tapestry "carpet" and valances with a picture of a lady and a unicorn, which appear to have been 320 centimeters in height. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that this scene may have been adapted from a preexisting model. Similarly, the *Start of the Hunt*, which as everyone has noted is stylistically different from the other pieces and contains no overt unicorn imagery, may have been appropriated from another *Hunt* sequence.

This suggestion brings us back to the question whether the tapestries derive from one or more sets. In identifying and enumerating the stylistic and iconographic distinctions between the sets, modern critics, with the exception of Freeman, have rejected the notion that the tapestries were created as a single ensemble. Yet perhaps we have been too precipitate. We simply do not know enough about late medieval workshop practices and the contemporary perception of uniformity and consistency of style to assume that what strikes us as stylistic disjunction would necessarily have appeared so to medieval viewers. Nor do we know the circumstances in which the cartoons of this set were painted, or the tapestry woven. Before we make categorical decisions regarding the aesthetic integrity, or lack thereof, of ensembles whose origins are so entirely unknown, it seems important to consider the slight evidence that the tapestries do carry with them, most notably,

the fact that all the tapestries are woven with the AE cipher in the corners of the main field. And although the panels display a stylistic disjunction, particularly the *Start of the Hunt*, the materials from which they are woven, the warp count, and the technical expertise of the weaving are remarkably consistent.

In summary, while the relationship of the *Start of the Hunt* to the rest of the tapestries remains in question, the present writer feels that the line of argument taken by Cavallo in the catalogue raisonné of the Metropolitan's medieval tapestry collection may require revision in two essential respects. First, the style and iconography of the *Mystic Hunt* do not, as Cavallo suggested, necessarily justify the assumption that it was not an integral part of the landscape *Hunt* sequence. Second, the implicit theme of the landscape *Hunts* is so logically concluded by the *Unicorn in Captivity* as a symbol of the resurrected Christ that it seems reasonable to suppose that this piece was woven as an integral part of that set, rather than as a stand-alone panel or a later addition.

#### *Place of Manufacture*

The place and circumstances in which the *Unicorn* tapestries were woven are undocumented. Technically, the tapestries conform to high-quality production that was increasingly centered in Brussels at the time they were woven, but they may equally have been made in another Netherlandish center, such as Bruges or Lille.

#### *Designer*

The designs are characterized by a compositional formula in which subsidiary elements are arranged around a central motif. There is little illusion of depth and little diminution of size between figures in the foreground and those behind. Most of the figures have rather expressionless faces, although a number of them tend to the grotesque. The style of the figures is closely related to those in the manuscripts, woodcuts, engravings, and stained-glass designs that have been associated with the workshop of an anonymous Parisian master who flourished in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, known as the Master of the *Très petites heures* of Anne of Brittany on the basis of one of the key works around which his oeuvre has been constructed. In view of the high quality and

idiosyncratic nature of the designs, Souchal suggested that the cartoons for this set may also have been produced in this workshop.<sup>21</sup> Although subsequent critics have proposed that Souchal's argument embraced much of the printed production in late fifteenth-century Paris and that no one workshop could have been responsible for all this work, the stylistic affinity between the figures in the five landscape *Hunts* and those in manuscripts and stained glass attributed to this workshop is so close that this component of her argument does deserve to be retained.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Patron*

Rorimer interpreted the *Unicorn in Captivity* as an allegory of the marriage of the individual or individuals identified by the letters A and E and suggested that the five landscape tapestries were woven to celebrate the 1499 marriage of Anne of Brittany to Louis XII, and that the two millefleurs panels were woven on the occasion of the marriage of Anne's daughter, Claude, to Francis of Angoulême (later Francis I) in 1514.<sup>23</sup> Rorimer's theories were rejected by Souchal when the tapestries were exhibited in Paris in 1973 and in New York in 1974.<sup>24</sup> Following exhaustive research into the possible significance of the AE cipher, Freeman also concluded that Rorimer's arguments were unfounded and that the meaning of the cipher remained a mystery. Numerous such ciphers are known during this period, sometimes in reference to the names or mottoes of individual patrons, sometimes in reference to words or ciphers whose meaning was evidently intended to be enigmatic and secretive. In the absence of any definitive evidence, and on the basis of the survival of the tapestries in the La Rochefoucauld family, she tentatively suggested that the original patron of the set may have been François I de La Rochefoucauld (d. 1516), councillor and chamberlain to Charles VIII and Louis XII, and godfather to Francis I. This, she suggested, would explain the presence of the letters F and R tied by a cord, similar to the AE ciphers elsewhere in the tapestry, which have been applied to the tapestry of the *Unicorn Leaps across a Stream*. Noting that these letters have been woven with a higher warp count than the rest of the tapestries (8–9 rather than 6–7½ per cm), and that a similar cipher has been attached to the border of another tapestry still at the château of Verteuil, she suggested



that these may have been cut from a valance or border originally associated with the tapestries (on the valid assumption that the millefleurs components of the group may have derived from a bed or canopy ensemble).<sup>25</sup> Subsequent writers have been unconvinced by this theory. Cavallo suggests that the letters were more likely applied during the nineteenth century, and that they come from an unrelated set of hangings.<sup>26</sup> The coats of arms that appear on the collar of one of the dogs in the *Start of the Hunt*, which are small, damaged, and subject to multiple interpretations, also continue to defy identification. Similarly, the significance of the inscription on the collar of one of the foreground dogs in the *Unicorn Defends Itself*, an

abbreviation of O F[R]ANC[ORUM] RE[X], remains unresolved.<sup>27</sup> As noted above, the present writer is unconvinced that the AE ciphers refer exclusively to the patron because, in the context of the Christian symbolism of the set, these letters may well relate to the first letters of the names of the first parents.

1. Cavallo 1998, pp. 13–18.
2. Cavallo 1993, p. 311.
3. Ackerman 1923; Ackerman 1933, pp. 56–60, 86–87.
4. Cavallo 1993, p. 317.
5. Rorimer 1938; Rorimer 1942; Rorimer 1945.
6. Freeman 1976, pp. 178–79.
7. Cavallo 1993, pp. 315–16.
8. Erlande-Brandenburg 1975.
9. Salet 1978.

10. Cavallo 1993, pp. 315–16.
11. Ibid., pp. 316–17.
12. Cavallo 1998, p. 45.
13. Photographs supplied by the Photograph Studio of the Metropolitan Museum.
14. Shepard 1930, esp. p. 47.
15. Translated from Eisler 1979, pp. 118–19.
16. Shepard 1930, p. 58.
17. Salet 1978, p. 106.
18. Cavallo 1993, p. 316.
19. Freeman 1976, p. 131.
20. Souchal 1973; Freeman 1976, pp. 194–206.
21. Souchal 1973; Reynaud in Paris 1993, pp. 265–70.
22. Cavallo 1993, p. 323; Reynaud in Paris 1993, p. 265.
23. Rorimer 1938; Rorimer 1942; Rorimer 1945.
24. Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 76–77; Freeman 1976, pp. 155–74.
25. Freeman 1976, pp. 170–71.
26. Cavallo 1993, p. 320.
27. Ibid., pp. 320–21.

## 6.

### *The Adoration of the Magi*

Designer unknown, probably Netherlandish  
Probably woven in Brussels, ca. 1476–88  
Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
138 x 331 cm (4 ft. 6½ in. x 10 ft. 10⅞ in.)  
9–10 warps per cm  
Musées de Sens (TC A1)

PROVENANCE: Ca. 1476–88, made presumably for Charles II de Bourbon; 1561, listed in an inventory of Sens Cathedral treasury; 1595, listed in an inventory of Sens Cathedral by its subject, described as a “parment,” or altarpiece.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCES: De Montaiglon 1880, p. 259; Guiffrey 1886, p. 136; Chartraire 1897, pp. 1–2; W. G. Thomson 1906, p. 116; Brussels 1935, no. 603; Friedländer 1939, p. 23; Crick-Kuntziger 1953, p. 99; d’Hulst 1960, no. 13; Paris 1965b, no. 825; E. Duverger 1969, p. 216; Georges Costa 1971; Paris 1973, no. 69; Naumann 1990, pp. 112–14; Cavallo 1993, pp. 41–42; Saulnier-Pernuit 1993; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 53.

CONDITION: Preserved in the Sens Cathedral treasury, the tapestry remains in good condition. The colors retain much of their original splendor: gilt-metal-wrapped threads in the three kings’ brocade robes glisten, and the palette ranges from the deep midnight-blue tunic

worn by the page on the right, through the rich crimson velvet effect of the Virgin’s gown, to the soft leaf-green color of the hose of the king at the left.

This tapestry is first documented in a 1561 inventory of the treasury of the Cathedral of Saint-Étienne in Sens, in the Yonne region of France, where it is listed as a gift of “Monsieur le Cardinal de Bourbon.” It may have been given to the cathedral by Cardinal Charles II de Bourbon, whose armorial devices, monogram, and motto appear in the tapestry’s border. Alternatively, the cardinal mentioned in the inventories may have been Cardinal Louis de Bourbon, archbishop of Sens (1536–57), a distant relative of Charles.<sup>2</sup> The outstanding quality of the *Adoration of the Magi*, amplified by its good condition, singles it out from surviving late fifteenth-century tapestries. The elegant, if somewhat mannered, figures flow in a rhythm, friezelike, across the horizontal space of the tapestry. The appeal of this tapestry is not limited to the rich costumes, colors, and poses, however. It is also remarkable,

and innovative, for the amount of painterly detail that the designer or cartoonist has included: from the minute representation of a strawberry plant at the lower left corner of the scene, to the miniature figures on horseback, galloping toward the stable, glimpsed in the upper left corner; from the hand and sword pommel mirrored in the armor of the soldier on the right, to the reflection of the barge in the lake gracing the landscape above him; from the comical faces of the two rustics peeping in through a window in the stable, to the detail of the tips of the bundles of thatch of the stable roof. As such, this work epitomizes stylistic changes that were to become more marked in Netherlandish tapestry design, particularly that of Brussels, from the 1470s.

#### *Description*

The tapestry represents the Adoration of the Magi, or Epiphany. This episode from the early life of Christ is described only in the Gospel according to Matthew (2:11), in which the magi “saw the young child with Mary his mother,

and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Neither the number nor the names of the wise men are mentioned. Nor are they identified as kings, with the term *magi* implying instead magicians or practitioners of Eastern magic. The tapestry responds to later legends woven around these mysterious figures by biblical commentators and popular devotional texts, such as the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* compiled by Jacobus de Voragine. These works developed the three kings, given the names Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior, as representative of the Three Ages of Man and the three then-known continents.

The eldest king, with flowing white beard, kneels to the left of the Virgin and child. Bareheaded, he has laid his hat in deference at the foot of the throne. The stooping figure of Joseph, standing slightly behind the throne on the right, already holds the ornate golden chalice that is this king's gift. To the right of the throne kneels the middle-aged king, with his brown hair and beard. He is caught in the action of lifting his hat and proffering his gift toward the outstretched hand of the Christ child. At the left of the scene is the third and youngest king, unbearded, with his rakishly short doublet and fashionably slashed sleeves. Having just arrived, he is still standing, his hat still on his head, as he turns back toward his page to take his gift. The fair features of all three magi suggest that in this tapestry they are not yet taken to represent the three continents, although the Moorish page at left does add an exotic note to the scene.

The central figure of the Christ child comes in stark contrast to the opulent and fantastical costumes of the exotic magi. He is naked and vulnerable in his Incarnation as the common flesh of humanity, and his pose charmingly reveals his dual identity.<sup>3</sup> As the Son of God, he leans back to accept the wise man's reverence; as a human baby, he plays with a lock of his mother's hair. In spite of the humble interior, as Queen of Heaven the Virgin is seated on an elaborately carved throne, the carved lion at her right possibly a reference to the throne of Solomon. Colorful gems decorate the step at the Virgin's feet. Behind the Virgin hangs a sumptuous red and gold cloth of honor. Left of



the throne are glimpsed the ox and the donkey. Traditional legends elaborating on the basic narrative of the Gospels have described how the ox and the ass refrained from eating the straw in the manger and instead warmed the baby Jesus with their breath. Joseph has rough clothes and a staff and the ruddy features and rheumy eyes of an old man.

#### Patron

Proudly bordering this regal scene, in a blaze of red and gold against a deep blue ground, are the

arms, motto, monogram, and distinctive flame motif of Charles II de Bourbon (1434–1488),<sup>4</sup> named archbishop of Lyon from 1444. Each of the representations of his shield in the four corners of the tapestry includes a cardinal's crimson hat and tassels. This enables the tapestry to be dated between 1476, the year in which he became a cardinal, and 1488, the year of his death.

Charles II de Bourbon was a wealthy and important French courtier, a confidant of King Louis XI, to whom he was related by marriage.





He held, among other posts, the governorship of Paris. Grandson of the Burgundian duke John the Fearless and cousin to Charles the Bold, he also bore numerous connections with the Southern Netherlands, making various visits to both Bruges and Brussels. The burgherlike figure right of Joseph may be Charles de Bourbon himself, as some have suggested.<sup>5</sup> However, the head bears very little resemblance to the painted portrait of the cardinal now in Munich.<sup>6</sup> His contemporary the French court chronicler Philippe de Commines

remarked that Cardinal de Bourbon was “not born for the peaceful functions of the priesthood . . . he had taste only for the tumult of arms. He used the unbishoply motto: *n’espoir ne peur*.” Indeed this “unbishoply” declaration of “No hope, no fear” has been repeated eleven times in the tapestry border.

In the past it has been suggested that the dramatic border of the *Adoration of the Magi* was woven separately from the tapestry and later sewn around it.<sup>7</sup> This might imply that Charles de Bourbon bought the Adoration

scene ready-made, later customizing it by the addition of a heraldic border, yet this seems unlikely. The border repeats the dominant colors from the Adoration scene, while the Adoration scene picks up elements from the border, such as the flame motifs, which appear in the hose both of the youngest king and of the page at the far right.

Charles II de Bourbon’s arms appear on two other tapestries: the *Three Coronations*, also in Sens, in which the flames also decorate hose, and a scene from the *Legend of Hercules*



(Mobilier National, Paris).<sup>8</sup> In the *Hercules* the arms were sewn over the weaving, which suggests that in this instance the archbishop did customize a stock tapestry.<sup>9</sup>

### Designer

The tapestry's horizontal format, dictated by its probable function as an altarpiece or antependium, necessitated a centrally oriented design. Rather than the more traditional left-to-right arrangement for the Adoration of the Magi scene, the Virgin and child were placed in the center, flanked at either side by the adoring kings. This composition was made popular in the mid-fifteenth century by the influential Brussels artist Rogier van der Weyden; it also appeared in the work of the Cologne artist Stefan Lochner. The stable and landscape are contained within an elegant framework, which, with its brown and beige coloring, is made to resemble the effect of carved wood. At both sides, the columns overlap the figures, for example cutting off from view the foot of the page on the left. The effect of this "wooden" frame is made yet more three-dimensional by subtle and effective representation of shadows in its carving. By layering the tracery framework over the Adoration scene, an effect of receding space was achieved.

Early French scholars chose to see the tapestry as the work of a Frenchman, Allardin de Souyn.<sup>10</sup> It has even been suggested that a tapestry workshop may have been set up in Sens in service of the archbishops.<sup>11</sup> However, stylistically

the tapestry is much closer to work traditionally regarded as produced in workshops based in Brussels. Its design has often been linked to a body of paintings grouped under the anonymous artist given the name the Master of the View of Saint Gudule.<sup>12</sup> The elegant mannered forms of some of the figures in the tapestry do indeed recall the works attributed to this artist. Nonetheless, despite the tapestry's evident quality, it should be noted that the composition is not an original creation but rather a collection of elements from earlier models convincingly collaged together. Cavallo drew visual links between the work of Hans Memling and this tapestry.<sup>13</sup> Within the arrangement of the figures, the pose and drapery of the Virgin, the pattern of the cloth of honor behind her head, and elements of the Christ child all reproduce an existing composition attributed to Memling.<sup>14</sup> The influence of Rogier van der Weyden on the central position of the Virgin has already been mentioned: the carriage and detail of the Virgin's head and the motif of the child playing with a lock of her hair are based on a model originating in Rogier's workshop, which was later reproduced in multiple panel paintings dating from the same era as the tapestry in Sens.<sup>15</sup> The figure of Joseph is similarly a variant on an existing type, visible, for example, in a *Presentation in the Temple*,<sup>16</sup> whose Joseph he resembles closely in pose and costume down to the buttons on his cloak, the handle of his staff, and the wooden clogs, or pattens, which he wears over his boots. The hand of a talented

designer lies behind the Sens *Adoration of the Magi* tapestry, uniting these elements into a composition whose success remains subtle and unobtrusive rather than obviously dramatic. Neither the identity of the designer nor the location of the workshop that produced it is certain. Nonetheless, its patron, Charles de Bourbon, was wealthy and influential; the tapestry itself was clearly valued and expensive, woven to extremely high quality, using fine materials and rich dyes. It remains a splendid and important piece.

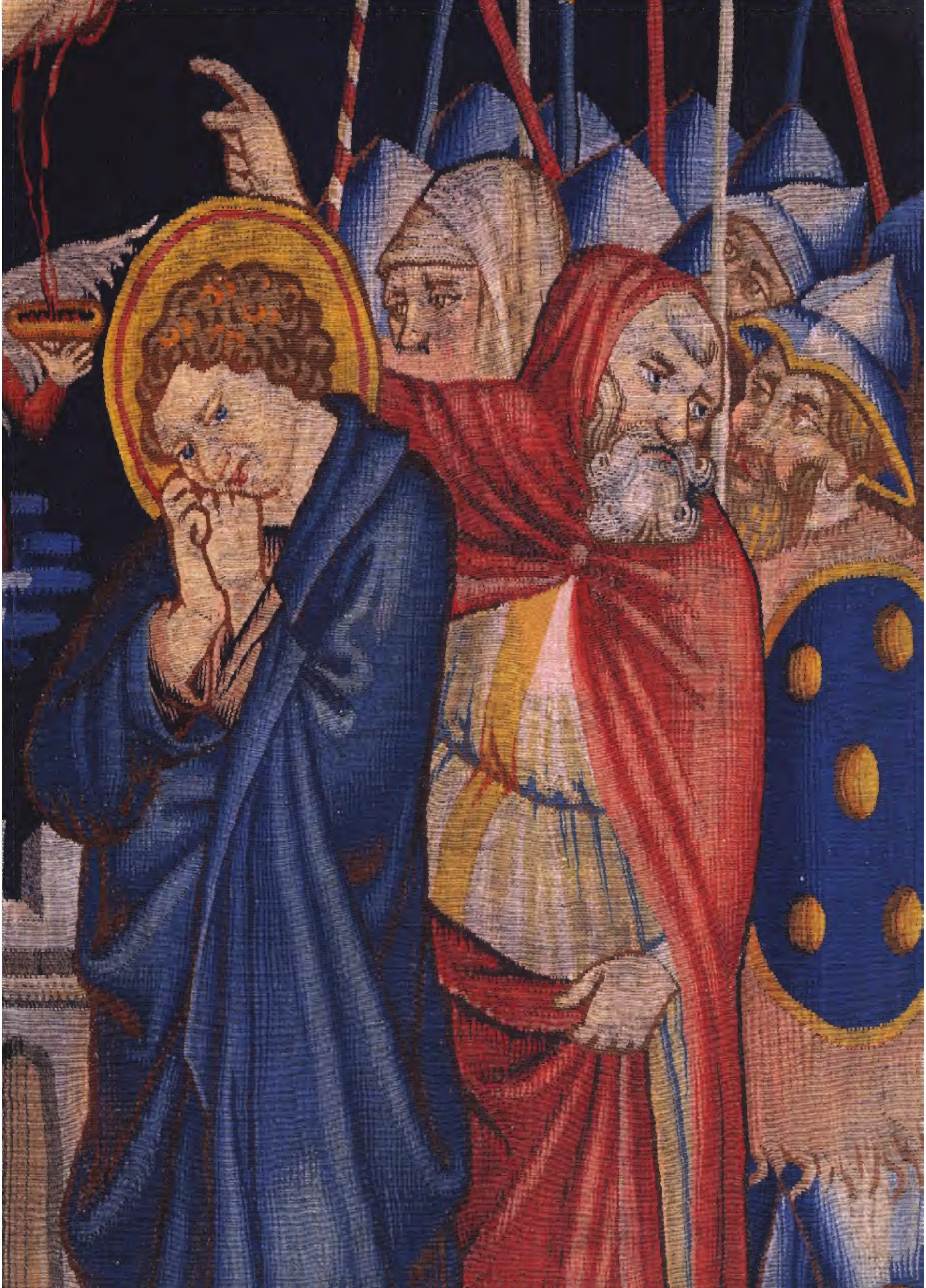
ELIZABETH CLELAND

1. Chartraire 1897, pp. 1–2.
2. Ibid., p. 1.
3. L. Steinberg 1983, esp. pp. 3–49.
4. Naumann 1990, pp. 108–9.
5. D'Hulst 1960, no. 13, p. 108; Saulnier-Pernuit 1993, pp. 14–15.
6. Attributed to Jean Hey, oil on oak, 34 x 25 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (WAF 648).
7. D'Hulst 1960, p. 105.
8. Paris 1973, pp. 165–67; New York 1974, pp. 166–68.
9. Bacri 1934.
10. De Montaiglon 1880, p. 259; Guiffrey 1886, p. 136.
11. W. G. Thomson 1906, p. 116.
12. First suggested by Hulin de Loo in an oral communication reported by Crick-Kuntziger in Brussels 1935, no. 603. Repeated in Friedländer 1939, p. 23; Crick-Kuntziger 1953, p. 99; d'Hulst 1960, no. 13, pp. 112–14; E. Duverger 1969, p. 216; Paris 1973, no. 69; and Delmarcel 1999a, p. 43.
13. Cavallo 1993, pp. 41–42.
14. De Vos 1994, no. B2: at Cramer art dealers, The Hague, in 1975.
15. De Vos 1999, nos. B6a (private collection, Germany) and B6b (sold Christie's, London, April 9, 1990, no. 32).
16. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Samuel H. Kress Collection (1961.9.28).











## Patronage and Production in Italy, 1380-1510

The extent to which Italian patrons valued and collected tapestries has been obscured by the extraordinary richness of artistic activity in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well as by the focus that art historians since Vasari have placed on certain aspects of this production, particularly the creative genius of individual artists and the related emphasis on connoisseurship in the study of drawing, painting, and sculpture. Yet, as Forti Grazzini has recently remarked, the notion that tapestry was the portable fresco of the North is very misleading because it was just as much a central part of the magnificence and figurative art of the courts of the leading Italian dynasties of the period.<sup>1</sup> The taste of Italian patrons for the tapestry medium had two significant results: on the one hand, large quantities of northern European tapestries, mostly purchased from stock but with a smaller percentage commissioned from designs by Italian artists, were imported into Italy; on the other, a number of small workshops were established in Italy, largely staffed by French and Netherlandish weavers, mostly, but not exclusively, under the direct control of Italian patrons. Very few of these tapestries, imported or locally produced, survive, but there

is a wealth of documentation recording the central role that they played in the art and culture of the time.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate the extent to which traditions of procurement, usage, and appreciation were well established long before Pope Leo X's commission to Raphael for the cartoons of the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel.

The early origins of Italian tapestry patronage are difficult to establish for the same reasons that they are obscure in northern Europe—the paucity and ambiguity of the documentation. The *Liber pontificalis* suggests that, from the eighth and ninth centuries, figurative textiles, sometimes of enormous size, played a major role in the liturgy and decoration of the Roman basilica. A number of historians have assumed that these were tapestries, but our information regarding Byzantine textiles suggests that it is just as likely that they were embroideries.<sup>3</sup> Embroideries were certainly being exported from northern Europe to Italy during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (among which high-quality English work, the so-called *opus anglicanum*, was especially favored), but the earliest certain records of large-scale northern European tapestries in Italy date from the late fourteenth century. As this is exactly the



Fig. 45. Miniature painting by Apollonio di Giovanni, from the *Aeneid*, 1450s. 8 x 61 cm. Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence (MS 492.75r)

Opposite: Fig. 44. Detail of cat. no. 7: *The Crucifixion and the Lamentation* from the *Passion of Christ*



Fig. 46. *Hercules Founding the Olympic Games on Mount Olympus* from the *Story of Hercules*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1440–50. Wool and silk, 386 x 478 cm. The Burrell Collection, Glasgow

period in which the northern European industry was developing, it seems reasonable to suppose that this importation was a relatively new phenomenon. Hardly surprisingly, some of the earliest references to tapestries in Italy occur in documentation relating to patrons with contacts at the Valois courts. For example, Amadeus VI of Savoy (1343–1383), ally to Louis of Anjou in his attempts to recover the kingdom of Naples, purchased eighteen pieces of tapestry, comprising two chambers decorated with eagles and clouds, from Louis's principal supplier, the Paris merchant Nicolas Bataille, in 1376.<sup>4</sup> Philip the Bold presented tapestries to his cousin Gian Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, during the 1390s. The rivals of the Visconti, the Gonzaga, were also among the vanguard of Italian tapestry patrons. Francesco Gonzaga (1366–1407) evi-

dently purchased tapestries or established the links through which subsequent purchases were made during his trip to Paris in 1389. In 1399 he sent a chamber of hangings to Paris to have the armorials altered, the Visconti viper being replaced with the lion of Bohemia. Among other textile hangings, the 1406 inventory of his goods lists two chambers of Paris tapestries with trees and the arms of Gonzaga and Bohemia, and a third, described as "of arras," which included gold thread and depicted hunters on a millefleurs ground.<sup>5</sup>

Documentation regarding tapestry patronage in Italy during the first third of the fifteenth century is patchy and incomplete. The foundations of the papal collection were established under Martin V (pope 1417–31) and Eugene IV (pope 1431–47), who received tapestries from Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, as



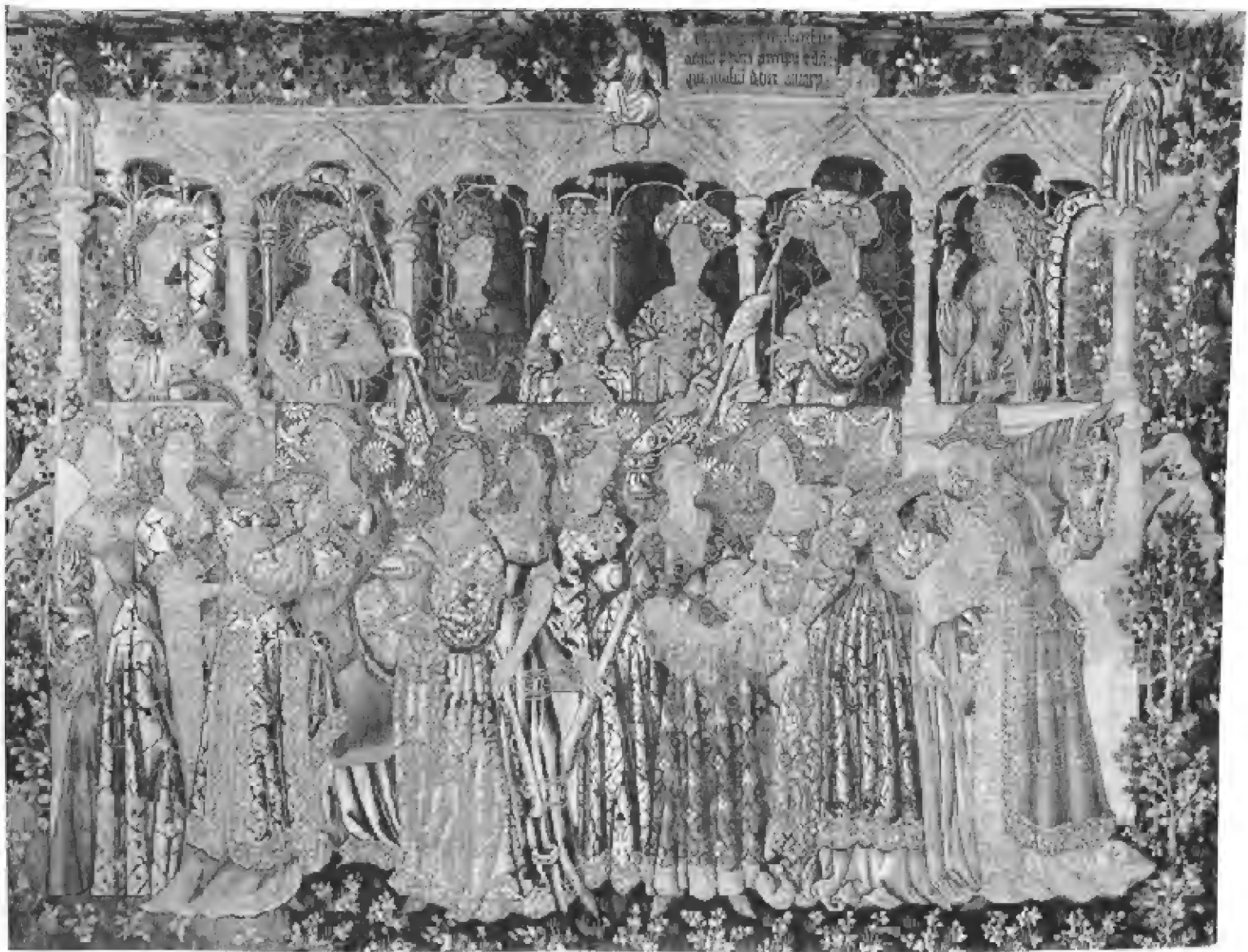


Fig. 47. *Joust of the Amazons* from the *Story of Hercules*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1440–50. Wool and silk, 398 x 497 cm. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

gifts in 1423 and 1440.<sup>6</sup> Evidence that they may also have made purchases in their own right is provided by a contract of 1430 between Pope Martin and the tapissier Jean Hosemant of Tournai, who was living at Avignon. According to this, Hosemant engaged to make a chamber of tapestries of good-quality wool with “various representations of branches, trees, animals, birds, fields, rivers, clouds, and other images of this sort, as comely as art can make them,” with a coat of arms in the center of each.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, Pope Eugene may have employed a weaver called Giacetto of Arras, who was to become a famous master in Siena during the 1440s and 1450s.<sup>8</sup>

If evidence regarding the origins of the papal collection is partial, there is more information about the early development of the

Este collection under Niccolò III d’Este (1383–1441), twelfth marquis of Ferrara from 1393.<sup>9</sup> A successful condottiere and patron of Italian artists like Antonio Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini, Niccolò was the first of his dynasty to place sizable commissions with the Netherlandish manufactories, such as the twenty-two *spalliere* (long, narrow tapestries used to cover the lower part of walls, sometimes above benches or long seats) woven with his armorials, acquired from Bruges in 1434.<sup>10</sup> An inventory drawn up in 1436–41 lists several chambers of figurative tapestries, some woven with silk and gold, including medieval romances much like those recorded in the collections of his northern European counterparts, such as the *Story of Pépin* (father of Charlemagne), and scenes of hunting and courtly life. The dimensions and descriptions of the

latter suggest that they may have been woven from cartoons that were the same as or similar to those of the *Devonshire Hunts* (see fig. 24), discussed above on page 32.<sup>11</sup>

Following his father's example, Leonello d'Este (1407–1450), thirteenth marquis of Ferrara from 1441, also appears to have commissioned and purchased a substantial number of works in the course of his reign.<sup>12</sup> A scholarly Maecenas of the arts who established Ferrara as a leading center of humanist learning and patronized artists like Piero della Francesca, Leonello had eclectic tastes that also embraced the work of northern masters, which he acquired through Paolo Poggi, a Lucchese merchant based in Bruges. In 1443 he paid Poggi 3,000 gold ducats for nine pieces of tapestry in anticipation of his second marriage, to Maria of Aragon, in 1444 (compare this price to the 120 ducats that he paid Poggi for a "most noble picture" in 1447); and in 1447 and 1449 he commissioned about fifty *spalliere* with the arms of Ferrara on a millefleurs ground (the designs of the armorials were prepared by court painters Jacopo Sagromoro and Nicolò Panigato).<sup>13</sup> No documentation survives of the figurative chambers that Leonello purchased, but analysis of an inventory drawn up in 1457 for his brother Borso d'Este allows us to speculate that he was responsible for acquiring a variety of courtly and romance subjects.<sup>14</sup> Based on the evidence of an account of 1462, Leonello can also be credited with having acquired the first set with a classical theme that appears in the Este collection, a tapestry bedchamber depicting the *Story of Hercules*, comprising four large wall hangings and four large bed hangings. The description of the 1457 inventory allows two of the bed components to be identified as weavings from a design series of which two duplicate panels survive: *Hercules Founding the Olympic Games on Mount Olympus* (fig. 46) and the *Joust of the Amazons* (fig. 47).<sup>15</sup> Despite the classical nature of the themes, the depictions were realized purely in terms of a medieval romance, a conception to which we will return below.

The foundations of a number of other important collections were also established during the late 1440s and early 1450s. Alfonso V of Aragon (1396–1458; king of Naples 1442–58), is well known as a discriminating patron of the arts with considerable interest in the classical world and an equal taste for both Netherlandish art, including the work of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, and Burgundian magnificence. Under the influence of the latter, he dispatched agents to the Netherlands in 1451 to purchase tapestries on his behalf, presumably in relation to the extensive rebuilding that he was undertaking at Castelnuovo. Basing themselves in Bruges, the agents acquired more than forty tapestries for the king, including sets of *Ahasuerus* and *Nebuchadnezzar*,

which were sent overland to Venice, then shipped down the coast to Siponto and by wagon across to Naples.<sup>16</sup> In 1455 he made additional purchases of textiles from Rome, including a tapestry of the *Passion*. Alfonso also had a Tournai weaver working for him in Naples by the mid-1450s, but the nature of his responsibilities is unknown.<sup>17</sup>

We know little of the terms under which Alfonso's tapestries were chosen or acquired, but a fascinating insight into the mechanics of such negotiations is provided by acquisitions made by Giovanni de' Medici (1421–1463) and Piero de' Medici (1414–1469) during the late 1440s and 1450s. In 1448, Fruosino da Panzano, Giovanni's agent in Bruges, wrote to inform him that, as directed, he had traveled to the Antwerp fair to look for appropriate tapestries for the main rooms of the Medici residence. He had found a large, well-executed tapestry of the *Story of Samson*, but he thought that on account of its size "it would be a chore to stretch it in your big room," and he did not like the subject "because there was a great quantity of dead people in it." It was also very expensive, costing 700 ducats. He had also seen another hanging, of *Narcissus*, which was the right size and cost 150 ducats but was woven rather coarsely. He concluded that there were no appropriate pieces for Giovanni's needs and that the best solution would be to commission a new set of cartoons (see above, p. 46).<sup>18</sup>

This was clearly the beginning of a dialogue that was to extend over the next ten years regarding tapestry commissions. In 1453 Giovanni's agent in Bruges, Gierozzo de' Pigli, purchased a *Story of Samson* chamber (perhaps a re-edition of the design about which Fruosino had been so hesitant) for shipment to Astorgio II Manfredi of Faenza (r. 1448–68), a client of the Medici. At the same time, Gierozzo commissioned the Lille-based weaver Pierre de Los to produce five hangings and a portiere of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* for his master, from designs brought from Italy. Gierozzo described de Los as the "best master in these parts" and stated that the weaver had "understood very well your [Giovanni de' Medici's] designs and your project." He reported that the commission would take eighteen months, of which four to six were required for the preparation of the cartoons, which appear to have been of some complexity and great expense. The high price charged for their preparation probably reflects that they were to be returned to the Medici (as per the contract) rather than remain in de Los's hands.<sup>19</sup>

Not to be outdone, Giovanni's brother Piero de' Medici, sent a Giacetto of Arras to Bruges in 1454 to negotiate and supervise the production of a set of tapestries. This master is probably to be identified with the weaver of note who had a workshop in Siena



between 1442 and 1458. The subject of Piero's commission is not documented, but once again it was to be made from Florentine designs sent in advance of Giacetto's arrival to be made into cartoons. Although de Los is not mentioned by name, his identity can be inferred from Gierozzo's correspondence. Again he was described as "il sommo dei maestri" (the finest among masters), someone who worked more for honor than money because he was already rich. Piero had intended to have the tapestry woven without silk, but Gierozzo told him that discussions with the master indicated that silk would be required for at least some of the details. Gierozzo informed Piero that Giacetto considered the cartoons well executed but that he, Piero, would have to pay for them if he wished to have them sent to Italy.<sup>20</sup> They had been executed with care because de Los intended to use them again. Thus we find the leading tapestry merchant of the day in Lille, collaborating with one of the leading Netherlandish weavers active in Italy. It is unclear whether Giacetto was actively engaged in weaving particularly important parts of the tapestry (as Lestocquoy has suggested) or simply present to negotiate and supervise production.<sup>21</sup>

De Los evidently provided other tapestries to the Medici in the following years, as we learn from correspondence of 1459, when Giovanni de' Medici commissioned another set from de Los, this time through the offices of Tommaso Portinari (patron of the famous Hugo van der Goes triptych at the Uffizi, Florence), who was appointed as the Medici agent in Bruges in 1459. Again, the design was sent from Italy, but the cartoons were to be made in the Netherlands, and the charge included a component for the canvas on which the cartoons would be painted.<sup>22</sup> The commission comprised a chamber of tapestries with three large *spalliere* depicting seated figures separated by passages of verdure and pendent coats of arms, along with three matching seat covers and twelve cushions. Dispatched by sea in 1460, the set was stolen in London; in 1463 it had still not been recovered.<sup>23</sup>

In the meantime, de Los provided other custom-made sets to the Medici. In 1462 Portinari wrote to Giovanni to say that the two chambers that de Los had recently finished for him were of such beauty that "everyone had to see them, and each agreed that he had never seen any more beautiful or finer work." Portinari went on to explain that de Los had agreed to take another commission on the condition that he could use one of the cartoons, while one of his own friends had also requested to have a weaving from the other. Portinari had agreed, hoping that Giovanni would not mind. He continued that, if Giovanni wanted to commission more tapestries, he should have the cartoons made in Florence, as on this occasion, so that they would serve "più a vostra intenzione"

(more to your wishes). In this case, it would be important to tell the painter not to apply the color so thickly, as the paint had flaked off one of them and if Giovanni wanted to use it again he would need to have it restored.<sup>24</sup>

In 1463 Portinari wrote to say that the tapestries stolen in 1460 had still not been found and asked if Giovanni would like to have the designs woven again. If he did, Portinari would have them woven in another workshop because he had not been entirely satisfied with the last weaving. (This indicates that de Los, rather than doing the weaving himself, had acted as an intermediary, delegating commissions to a number of workshops.) Portinari further wanted to know if, in another weaving, he could change the colors of the seated figures because the gray used in the first weaving did not work well in tapestry.<sup>25</sup>

The Medici agents were also an important source of tapestries for other Italian patrons. Between 1459 and 1462 Portinari arranged the production by de Los of five chambers of tapestry (comprising ten pieces) for Gasparo, count of Vimercato (and governor of Genoa from 1464) at the high cost of 2,234 livres.<sup>26</sup> Subsequently, during the 1460s and 1470s, the Medici agent in Lyon, Lyonet de Rubeis, provided tapestries to a variety of Italian patrons, including Yolande, regent of Savoy (d. 1472). The rich collections of the Savoy court are recorded by inventories taken in 1497–98.<sup>27</sup>

If the purchases of Alfonso V of Aragon and the Medici demonstrate the types of negotiation through which Italian patrons were able to acquire tapestries from the Netherlands, it is clear that the Netherlandish merchants were also keen to solicit the patronage of Italian customers. A remarkable demonstration of this is provided by evidence relating to Francesco Sforza (1401–1466), duke of Milan from 1452, at whose request Pasquier Grenier's son and nephew traveled to Milan in 1459 "in order to bring and present certain designs of the king Alexander and certain other tapestries to the illustrious master." The outcome of this visit is undocumented, but the *Alexander* designs were presumably for the same design series as that sold to Philip the Good in the same year. It has been suggested that the *Alexander* tapestries now in the Doria Pamphilj collection (see fig. 25) may have resulted from a Sforza commission.<sup>28</sup> Although we know no more of Jean and Melchior Grenier's activity in Italy in 1459, it is unlikely that they would have returned to Tournai without taking the opportunity to visit other Italian courts. Evidence that they were subsequently in contact with a number of Italian patrons either directly or through intermediaries is suggested by Federico da Montefeltro's acquisition in 1476 of a duplicate set of the *Story of the Trojan War* series of which Grenier had supplied the first weaving for Charles the Bold in 1472.<sup>29</sup>

The vast majority of the tapestries being used in Italy during the fifteenth century were imported from the Netherlands, but it is evident that the ready market for such products and the turbulent circumstances of the Hundred Years War in northern Europe provided the incentive for a number of French and Netherlandish weavers to travel south in search of work at the Italian courts.

Some of the earliest known Italian tapestry workshops appear to have been established under Francesco Gonzaga's son Gianfrancesco Gonzaga (1395–1444), first marquis of Mantua (from 1432), patron of Pisanello and the humanist mathematician Vittorio da Feltre. During the 1410s a Nicolò di Francia is recorded weaving a variety of furnishing tapestries for the marquis, including one ensemble after designs by the artist Giovanni Corradi. Also documented in Gonzaga employ, from 1422 to 1442, producing tapestry *bancali* (long, narrow tapestries used to cover pews or seats), is one Zanino di Francia.<sup>30</sup> Nicolò, who disappears from accounts after 1420, is possibly to be identified with a master of that name in Ferrara in 1423–25; the activity of a handful of French and Netherlandish weavers is documented there from the early 1420s.<sup>31</sup> Relocations like this were to characterize fifteenth-century Italian production as masters moved from one city to another, dependent on the varying interests and finances of their patrons, and unfettered by the guild restrictions that discouraged such movement in the Netherlands.

Documentation relating to the weavers working for the Este and the Gonzaga during the second quarter of the fifteenth century supports the common assumption that most of these early Italian workshops were primarily concerned with the repair of existing collections and with the production of fairly coarse furnishing tapestries and *bancali*. Equally, evidence that some of these early workshops were capable of producing larger figurative tapestries is provided by the *Passion* set woven for the Basilica of San Marco in Venice during the 1420s (cat. no. 7). Tentatively attributed to the workshop of a Giovanni of Bruges and a Valentino of Arras, documented in Venice from 1421, from a design ascribed to Niccolò di Pietro (fl. 1394–1430), the *Passion* compositions are conceived in a spare and monumental style, with incidental detail kept to a minimum. This is in marked contrast to the more anecdotal and decorative style that already characterized contemporary Netherlandish production. As such, it is the earliest extant manifestation of the way Italian artists, unencumbered by an awareness of the Netherlandish tradition of tapestry design, generally approached tapestry composition in much the same way they would fresco or panel painting. Their results diverged markedly from those of their Northern counterparts, and this difference played a very important role in the later development of Renaissance tapestry design.

Further evidence of more ambitious production in Italy during this period is provided by documentation relating to weavers active in Siena, Rome, and Florence during the 1440s and 1450s. One of the most remarkable of these figures was Rinaldo di Gualtieri, known as Boteram (fl. 1438–82). Registered as an apprentice in Brussels in 1431–32, he may have traveled to the Ferrarese court in about 1436, before moving on, in 1438, to Siena, where he entered the employ of the commune. Here he was engaged to teach the art of tapestry weaving to three or four Sienese citizens each year in return for an annual wage of 20 florins. His initial six-month contract was extended on the grounds that more time was required to teach the apprentices, but Boteram's relationship with the commune appears to have been strained, and he left Siena in 1442, apparently to return to the employ of Leonello d'Este of Ferrara, shortly after the arrival from Ferrara of another master, Giacetto di Benedetto da Razzo (fl. 1441–58), also known as Giacetto of Arras (see above, pp. 88–89). In 1449 Boteram entered the service of Ludovico II Gonzaga (1412–1478), second marquis of Mantua from 1444, for whom he established a workshop that wove armorial tapestries and millefleurs panels from cartoons by Giacomo Bellanti di Terra d'Otranto (fl. 1458–75). Subsequently he departed for Modena and then for Venice in 1457, bearing a recommendation from Ludovico II. He appears to have been based primarily in Venice during the following years, acting as an intermediary in the purchase of numerous tapestries for the Este and Gonzaga courts and making trips on their behalf to the Netherlands.<sup>32</sup>

Following Boteram's departure from Siena, Giacetto, the weaver who replaced him, remained there for the next decade, training weavers and making furnishing tapestries and figurative wall hangings, including, in 1445, a *spalliera* depicting ten standing figures, separated by trees and coats of arms, for the council of the commune. In 1446 Giacetto received another commission, this time for the weaving of three large tapestry reproductions of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's 1338–39 frescoes, the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government*, from cartoons painted on canvas by Lodovico di Luca. The contract stipulated that, to ensure the quality, Giacetto himself was to execute the faces of the figures.<sup>33</sup>

The quality and renown of Giacetto's work attracted the attention of a wider market, and in the early 1450s he was engaged to execute a commission for Nicholas V (pope 1447–55), who, in keeping with the spirit of the times, evidently took a personal and creative approach to tapestry patronage. Pope Nicholas had commissioned a *spalliera* and two *bancali* with figures from a workshop in Florence in 1451.<sup>34</sup> In the same year, he commissioned a large tapestry with six scenes of the *Story of Saint Peter* from Giacetto in



Siena, which was completed by 1453 (according to a later inventory, this included gold thread).<sup>35</sup> Although the pope was also acquiring tapestries from the Netherlands, he then took the step of establishing a workshop in Rome in 1455 under the master weaver Renaud de Maincourt (previously active in Paris in 1448). Renaud and his staff of four weavers may have been responsible for the large *Creation of the World* tapestry recorded in a later inventory with the arms of Nicholas V and Calixtus III (pope 1455–58).<sup>36</sup> Shortly after the death of Nicholas, Renaud and his weavers relocated to Ferrara to work for Borso d'Este, but Nicholas's example was followed by Pius II (pope 1458–64). In addition to acquiring tapestries from Venice in 1459, Pius engaged Giacetto of Arras to relocate from Siena to Rome (Pius was of Siennese origin, and he presumably knew of Giacetto's work for the Palazzo Pubblico, quite apart from the tapestries he made for Nicholas V). Here, Giacetto continued to weave decorative *spalliere* for the pope, as well as to undertake repairs and insert armorials on the older tapestries in the papal collection.<sup>37</sup>

A third important master documented in Italy during the second third of the century was Livino Gigli of Bruges (fl. 1444–73). His name first appears when he worked for Leonello d'Este in 1444, and he was to work in Ferrara for much of the next twenty years, with the exception of the period 1455–57, when he set up a workshop in Florence to weave large figurative tapestries for the Ringhiera of the Palazzo della Signoria (Palazzo Vecchio), after cartoons by Neri di Bicci and Vittorio Ghiberti.<sup>38</sup> When Gigli returned to Ferrara in 1457, a testimonial described him as “a most excellent craftsman, with miraculous skills in the weaving of figures in tapestry.”<sup>39</sup> Gigli worked for the next five years on a chamber of hangings depicting pavilions, arms, and devices on a ground with animals and verdure from designs by the Ferrarese court artist Cosmè Tura (1430–1495). Gigli's name disappears from the Este archives between the end of 1462 and 1473, but he is probably to be identified with the Levino Hersella di Fiandra at work at the Milanese court, from early 1463, along with other weavers from Picardy and Burgundy, on a project that appears to have been related to the renovations that Francesco Sforza was undertaking on the Castello di Porta Giovia.<sup>40</sup>

If Boteram, Giacetto, and Gigli were evidently celebrated and important merchant-weavers, documentation demonstrates that they had numerous compatriots in Italy, particularly during the second third of the fifteenth century, when small workshops are also recorded in Perugia, Correggio, Bologna, and elsewhere. In Bologna and Perugia, documents indicate that the weavers were invited by the town councils, which hoped to establish local tapestry industries.<sup>41</sup> For example, the contract issued to a weaver in

Bologna, one “Petrus Petri” (fl. 1460–62), included the condition that he should provide instruction to local pupils. So far as his weaving was concerned, he was to make sure that he did not leave large gaps between the figures and the floral motifs.<sup>42</sup> None of these initiatives appears to have lasted more than a few years, probably because they lacked the combination of ingredients that long-term production inevitably required—sufficient numbers of skilled weavers, high-quality cartoons, and, above all, long-term financing for wages and materials. Native production did thrive, however, during this period in two Italian towns, Ferrara and Mantua, under the enlightened patronage of the Este and the Gonzaga.

#### ESTE AND GONZAGA PATRONAGE, 1450–1500

Nowhere was the enthusiasm of Italian patrons for the tapestry medium during the second third of the fifteenth century more lavishly indulged than in the courts of Borso d'Este in Ferrara and Ludovico II Gonzaga in Mantua. Borso d'Este (1413–1471), first duke of Modena and Reggio (from 1452) and of Ferrara (1471), was keenly aware of the value of the arts as a tool of propaganda and personal magnificence. Indeed, Borso's court was one of unparalleled splendor, emulating that of the Burgundian court (links between Ferrara and Brussels were close: one of Borso's nephews, Leonello's natural son, Francesco d'Este, was resident there from 1444). During Borso's reign the Este tapestry collection grew to a size and grandeur that was widely remarked at the time. When an inventory was drawn up in 1457 on the occasion of the appointment of a new “ufficiale delle tappezzerie” (officer of tapestries), the collection comprised 31 large tapestry wall hangings, 10 tapestry bedchambers (besides another 12 in other luxury textiles), 37 tapestry bedcovers, 14 *spalliere*, 101 tapestry bench covers, and 15 doorcovers.<sup>43</sup>

Much of the collection had been acquired in the first seven years of Borso's rule via the merchant-weaver Boteram, who, despite his move to Mantua in 1449, and subsequently to Venice in 1457, continued to act as an agent for Borso, arranging commissions. One of these, in 1445, was for a chamber of tapestries to be done in the Netherlands from colored designs provided by Gerardo da Vicenza (fl. 1457–80).<sup>44</sup> In later years, he mediated a number of other major acquisitions, such as the order in 1461 for eighty *bancali* with the Este arms set within wreaths “ala antiga” on a millefleurs ground and the similar armorial hangings commissioned for the Este barge in 1465. Boteram also sold Borso various sets that appear to have been acquired in the open market, including a *Story of Judith and Holofernes* (1458), a *Story of Ahab* set (1461), and an ensemble of hunting scenes showing fabulous animals (1458).<sup>45</sup> None survives, but the character of these purchases



Fig. 48. *Judith Taking Holofernes' Head* from the *Story of Judith and Holofernes*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1460. Wool and silk, 412 x 325 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Frank Jay Gould, 1946 (46.58.2)



may be gauged by two extant tapestries, one from a set of *Judith and Holofernes* (fig. 48), the other from a *Story of Ahab* set (fig. 49). Both appear to be duplicate weavings of pieces in Borso's collection; their identification depends on the detailed inventory description of the former and the rarity of the latter subject in tapestry design.<sup>46</sup>

Several master tapestry weavers are also recorded working for Borso in Ferrara in the 1450s and 1460s, including, briefly, the Renaud "de man curta" (Renaud de Maincourt), who had worked for Nicholas V in Rome. In 1456 Borso commissioned Renaud to weave a bedchamber with heraldic devices, probably from designs by Cosmè Tura, but Borso ordered work to stop after the first piece had been completed because he disliked the color. Renaud's name

disappears from Este accounts after this date.<sup>47</sup> The work was taken over by a Master Rubinetto (Rubino) di Francia (fl. 1457–84), who subsequently completed two more chambers of tapestry during the 1460s, and a *paliotto* (altar panel) for the altar of the ducal chapel woven in gold and silver in conjunction with the weaver Giovanni di Lattres of Arras (fl. 1461–71) and other assistants. An interesting reflection of the quality of Rubinetto's work is provided by a description of the rooms prepared for the marquis of Mantua and his son during their visit to Ferrara in 1462, which his secretary, Giorgio della Strada, sent to the marchesa of Mantua: "The bedchamber and wardrobe of my Illustrious Lord is hung with the most beautiful tapestries. In the bedchamber there is a set that the marquis Leonello purchased that is made



Fig. 49. *Fulfillment of the Curse of Ahab* (fragment) from the *Story of Ahab*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1460–70. Wool and silk, 363 x 461 cm. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

with certain stories of Hercules [i.e., the *Hercules* set discussed above], all in tapestry, a most worthy work. The tapestries in the wardrobe were made in Ferrara with his [Este] device held up by angels. In truth, they could not be more beautiful or more sumptuous."<sup>48</sup> Although the duke's secretary was impressed by the Ferrarese tapestries, it is to be noted that, as with so many of the larger Italian ensembles, it was woven with a heraldic design rather than a complex figurative narrative.

The dominant role that French and Netherlandish weavers continued to play in Italian workshops during the second half of the fifteenth century is demonstrated by the names of other weavers recorded in Ferrara during the 1460s: these include a Pietro di Fiandra (fl. 1459–71), a Zanetto di Francia (mentioned in 1462), and two weavers from Tournai, Giovanni Mille (fl. 1464–83) and Rinaldo Grue (fl. 1464–65). The last two appear to have been invited to Ferrara by the commune with the intention of establishing a tapestry industry in the town as specified in a document of December 1464: "impressive masters, most perfect in the art of tapestry making, to introduce into said city this art of making tapestry and bench pieces, and to teach it to anyone who wants to learn."<sup>49</sup> Although they received an initial commission from Borso, this enterprise does not appear to have continued for long. Rinaldo's name disappeared from the archives while Giovanni became one of the court tapestry restorers.

Borso maintained cordial relations with many of the leading dynasties of the day, and the Este court was in a constant state of preparation for visiting dignitaries, on which occasions the lavish tapestry ensembles were among the foremost demonstrations of Este magnificence. Borso himself took a hand in the decision as to which tapestry chambers should be used, for whom, and in which location, or which ensembles should be loaned to friends and relatives. The quality of tapestries used on such occasions was in direct proportion to the importance of the personage, constituting a veritable politics of splendor.<sup>50</sup> When the marquis of Mantua visited in 1462, the arrangements involved the hanging of twenty-four wall tapestries, six bedchambers, and twenty-seven bedcovers. The upshot of this impressive display was that the following year the Gonzaga asked Borso if they could borrow tapestries for the decorations attendant on the wedding of Federico. A list of the loans includes four of the newest bedchambers, forty-five *bancali*, ten bedcovers, and many of the finest wall hangings. Perhaps the most impressive display of all was occasioned by the joint visit of the emperor Frederick III and the marquis of Mantua in 1469, when most of the Este tapestries were utilized in one location or another.<sup>51</sup>

In the early years of his reign, Ercole I d'Este (1431–1505), marquis of Este, second duke of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio (from

1471), evidently shared his brother's enthusiasm for the tapestry medium, and a number of new purchases are recorded among the sumptuous trappings with which he traveled to Venice in 1472. In the following year he commissioned new tapestries in anticipation of his marriage to Eleonora of Aragon, daughter of Alfonso II (1449–1496; king of Naples 1494–95) from designs by Tura, including hangings for the nuptial bed to be woven by Rubinetto di Francia and Giovanni Mille.<sup>52</sup> Rubinetto, who received an annual stipend, was the principal weaver in the service of the Este court during the 1470s. He executed a number of tapestries after Tura designs, including, in 1475 and 1476, two altar panels, one containing gold and silver threads, the other in wool and silk alone. These can almost certainly be identified with two antependiums depicting the Pietà, which survive in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection (cat. no. 8) and in Cleveland (fig. 51), the only extant products of the Ferrarese manufactory. Subsequently, Rubinetto and Giovanni Mille were to weave additional designs from cartoons by Tura, including a hanging of the *Judgment of Solomon* (1480).<sup>53</sup> Although Ercole commissioned mule covers from Boteram in 1480 and made other purchases in 1482, his interest in further tapestry acquisition appears to have waned thereafter, probably owing to the drain on his financial resources caused by the war with Venice (1482–84) and his increasing preoccupation with spiritual rather than worldly matters. Consequently, the surviving Ferrarese ateliers seem to have closed down by the mid-1480s.

Despite the closure of local workshops in Ferrara in the early 1480s, the inherited Este collection continued to be used on a regular basis, and Ercole d'Este purchased more Netherlandish tapestries in 1489, in preparation for the marriage of Isabella d'Este to Francesco II Gonzaga, in 1490; and in 1501 for the engagement of Alfonso d'Este to Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander VI. When Lucrezia arrived in Ferrara in 1502, Este splendor was met by Borgia splendor. Her baggage train consisted of one hundred and fifty mules carrying a wealth of jewels, plate, and textiles, including a number of sumptuous tapestry ensembles, of which the most valuable appear to have been sets of the *Veneration of the Virgin* (possibly a duplicate of the one supplied to Philip the Handsome and Joanna of Castile in 1502 by the Brussels merchant Pieter van Aelst; see fig. 54), and others of *David and Uriah* and *Abraham*.<sup>54</sup>

Considering the close links between the Ferrarese and Mantuan courts, it is hardly surprising that the Gonzaga were also avid tapestry patrons. Ludovico II Gonzaga, a celebrated condottiere, was a patron of artists like Leon Battista Alberti and Andrea Mantegna. Following Boteram's transfer to the Gonzaga court in 1449, Ludovico used his services to acquire large numbers of tapestries, and Boteram traveled to the Netherlands on Ludovico's behalf in 1462,



1466, and 1476. Following Ludovico's death in 1478, Boteram continued to act as a factor to Federico (r. 1478–84) and his son, Francesco II (r. 1484–1519), agreeing, in 1480, to supply five or six tapestries to the Gonzaga court per year.<sup>55</sup> In 1488 Boteram received a payment of 950 ducats for tapestries that he had recently supplied.<sup>56</sup> No evidence of the subjects of these tapestries survives, but it seems probable that Boteram may have been responsible for the delivery of the tapestries that Francesco II sent to Ferrara in August 1488 at the request of Duke Ercole for the reception of the duke of Milan. These included six large tapestries of *Hannibal and Scipio* and four large tapestries of the *Story of Lucretia*, both sets inherited from Ludovico's collection.<sup>57</sup>

If most of the Gonzaga tapestries originated in the Netherlands, Ludovico and his wife were also responsible for encouraging the development of workshops in Mantua.<sup>58</sup> These produced designs by court artists including Andrea Mantegna (1430–1506), who had relocated to the Gonzaga court in 1459. In 1465 the master weaver Maffeo de Mafeis (fl. 1462–68) was sent to Venice to purchase silk for an "aparamento" of tapestries for which Mantegna had prepared the designs.<sup>59</sup> As Brown has suggested, it is tempting to identify this production with the celebrated *spalliera* in the Camera degli Sposi in the Palazzo Ducale, where painting appears to have begun in the same year.<sup>60</sup> Although the subject of this *spalliera*, which was almost as renowned as the room itself during the late fifteenth century, is unknown, circumstantial evidence that this, or another commission, was very impressive is provided by anecdotal evidence some fifty years later: in 1519, the knowledgeable Venetian connoisseur Marcantonio Michiel compared Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries favorably to three famous tapestry ensembles of which one, said to have been designed by Mantegna, belonged to the duke of Mantua.<sup>61</sup> It is tempting to think that these famous Mantegna tapestries may have been woven in Mantua and that they may have been among the tapestries lent to Ferrara in 1488; nevertheless, the first assumption in particular needs to be treated with caution as there is no certain evidence of the production of such large-scale and impressive tapestries in Mantua during these years. Considering the ease and frequency with which the Este and Gonzaga arranged commissions through Boteram, it is equally possible—and perhaps more likely—that the Mantegna tapestries to which Michiel referred would have been made in the Netherlands. Whether they were produced in the Netherlands or in Ferrara, we can only regret the loss of what may have been a seminal design ensemble.

Mantegna evidently undertook other tapestry designs as well. In 1469 Ludovico requested drawings of two guinea fowl ("due galline de India"), of which he had specimens in his garden, for a

tapestry of unspecified subject. Some historians have linked this commission to the birds in the foreground of a tapestry antependium depicting the Annunciation (cat. no. 9), which, although it carries the arms of Francesco II Gonzaga (fourth marquis from 1484), could be a reweaving of a design conceived for Ludovico some years earlier. This assumption is open to question, and the commission to Mantegna may equally have been for another tapestry, perhaps a verdure *spalliera*, which may then have provided a later designer with the models for the birds in the *Annunciation*.

As in Ferrara, local weaving activity appears to have waned in Mantua in the last fifteen years of the fifteenth century, although the *Annunciation* tapestry may be the single extant piece that demonstrates continuing court production. Whether or not Francesco II was actively engaged in promoting local production, he shared his ancestors' appreciation of Netherlandish tapestries. On the occasion of his marriage to Isabella d'Este in 1490, tapestries were borrowed from various courts, including the *Story of the Trojan War* set that Federico da Montefeltro had purchased from Pasquier Grenier in 1476.<sup>62</sup> In 1491 Francesco acquired a set of tapestries of the *Story of Rhodes* (probably woven from the same cartoons as the piece that survives in the Museo Textil i d'Indumentaria, Barcelona), and as commander of the allied Italian forces, he captured tapestries from Charles VIII, king of France, when the French army was defeated in 1495 at Fornovo. A document of 1516–17 mentions tapestries of the *Story of "Tirro"* and *Herkinbald* in his collection, along with other figurative subjects. Isabella d'Este also made a number of tapestry purchases from Venice (1497) and from Lyon (1502), the latter including eight large tapestries for two bedchambers, five portieres, and other *spalliere*, all of verdure. A verdure with Isabella's arms, of a style often linked to the Bruges workshops,



Fig. 50. *Mass of the Capella Papalis*. Miniature painting by Giuliano Amadei, between 1484 and 1492. 10.9 x 16.2 cm. Musée Condé, Chantilly

survives in the Palazzo Vescovile in Mantua in very dilapidated condition.<sup>63</sup> No figurative commissions by these famous patrons are recorded, but it is unclear whether this is the consequence of partial documentation or an indication of taste.

Besides the Gonzaga tapestries from designs by Mantegna, noted above, Marcantonio Michiel's 1519 description of the Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* cited two other famous tapestry ensembles that Raphael's *Acts* excelled, of which one was said to belong to "Alfonso, overo Federico Re di Napoli." The Neapolitan archives were destroyed in 1943, and we know little of the tapestry collections of the kings of Naples after Alfonso I (Alfonso V of Aragon), to whom several historians have assumed this citation refers. However, as the reigns of Alfonso II (r. 1494–95) and Federico (r. 1496–1501) were contiguous, it seems more likely that Michiel's citation refers to them. The question has been complicated by the assumption made by some historians that Michiel's reference was to a set of large canvases, rather than tapestries, by Rogier van der Weyden that were acquired by Alfonso I and described in Bartolomeo Fazio's *De viris illustribus* (1456) and, with more detail, in a letter sent to Michiel in 1524 by the Neapolitan Pietro Summonte. According to Summonte, these had cost Alfonso the enormous sum of 5,000 ducats, and it seems to have been this high figure that led Baxandall and Smit to assume that these were gold-woven tapestries. In fact, the terms used by Fazio and Summonte to describe the panels ("in linteis picturae" and "panni di tela") do not support this assumption, and the high valuation may well reflect an oral tradition that had been exaggerated over the passage of time. While we are unlikely to know the answer with certainty, it seems prudent to assume that the Rogier van der Weyden works were painted on canvas, as we know that large numbers of such works were imported to Italy during the fifteenth century.<sup>64</sup>

#### PAPAL COLLECTIONS

The third of the famous tapestry ensembles invoked by Michiel in 1519 belonged to Julius II, and this brings us back to the papal collection. The foundations that had been established under Martin V, Eugene IV, and Nicholas V were developed by their successors during the second half of the century. An inventory of the historic collection drawn up under Leo X in 1518 groups the older tapestries according to the reign in which they were thought to have been acquired, largely on the basis of the armorials depicted on the tapestries. While this information is not always accurate (because it seems to have been common practice for later popes to apply their armorials to tapestries that they had inherited), the list provides valuable information about the subjects and types of

tapestry with which the papal collection was augmented during the second half of the fifteenth century.

Nicholas V and Pius II had enriched the collection with purchases from the Netherlands and with commissions from Italian workshops, and an idea of the splendor of the papal collection by the early 1460s is provided by Pius's *Commentarii*. This describes how he instructed the cardinals to hang tapestries in the streets of Viterbo for the festival of Corpus Christi in 1462, and how his own tapestries, woven in wool, silk, and gold, and illustrating ancient stories, portraits of famous men, and images of many kinds of animals, were used for the tabernacle in the churchyard of San Francesco.<sup>65</sup> An inventory taken at his death in 1464 lists more than fifty storiated tapestries, two chambers of tapestry, and various millefleurs *spalliere* and bench pieces.<sup>66</sup>

The papal example ensured that tapestry was a requisite in the splendor expected of rich Italian ecclesiastics by the mid-fifteenth century. This influence is demonstrated by documentation and inventories relating to the patronage of figures in Pius's immediate circle. For example, the magnificence of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (1444–1483) was widely acclaimed during his life. Pius II was impressed by his tapestries when they were displayed at Viterbo in May 1462, and when Francesco visited Bologna in 1471 one chronicler stated that the value of the collection was estimated at more than 10,000 ducats. He singled out one set for particular praise, a *Story of Alexander*: "against the Indian king Porus, with armed men on horseback and on foot, and elephants with fortresses and fighting men on their backs; many of them wounded with spears, and so well worked they seem to be alive."<sup>67</sup> It sounds as if this may have been a weaving of the series for which *modelli* have survived in Bern and London (see fig. 29).<sup>68</sup> The inventory taken at the cardinal's death in 1483 lists about sixty figurative tapestries, most with scriptural subjects, but others with scenes of *Achilles* and *Perseus*, as well as verdure *spalliere* and bench tapestries.<sup>69</sup>

A similar wealth of tapestries is demonstrated in the inventory of goods belonging to Cardinal Pietro Barbo, drawn up four years before his election as Pope Paul II (r. 1464–71). This lists 132 tapestries (of which only one included gold thread, a salutary reminder of the rarity of such pieces in the collections of all but the very richest patrons). These included 26 pieces with figures of saints, 32 pieces with profane subjects, 35 *spalliere*, *bancali*, *dossiers* (back cloths for thrones or seats), and furniture pieces, 18 verdures, and 21 portieres and mule covers, many with coats of arms of the cardinal. Following his election, Paul applied his arms to many of the finest tapestries that he had inherited from his predecessors, including that of *Pope Eugene IV and the Emperor Sigismund*.<sup>70</sup> In 1465 he lent tapestries to Ferdinand I of Aragon (1423–1494; king of



Naples, 1458–94) when the latter's son, Alfonso (who would become Alfonso II, king of Naples) married Ippolita Sforza, daughter of Francesco, duke of Milan. The loan included gold-woven tapestries of *Joseph* and of *Pope Eugene IV and the Emperor Sigismund*, along with others of *Octavian* and *Jacob* woven in wool and silk, a loan that was returned in 1467.<sup>71</sup>

Like his predecessors, Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere; pope 1471–84) was an active tapestry patron. The 1518 inventory lists eighteen tapestries with his arms, including two gold-woven panels with scenes from the Old and New Testaments, two of the *Seven Theological Virtues*, single gold-woven pieces of the *Adoration* and *Saint Helena and the Holy Cross*, and three large panels without gold of the *Judaic War under Titus and Vespasian*.<sup>72</sup> Fragments from at least two separate design series of this last subject survive, including one especially fine series whose style of design and weave are closely related to that of the *Story of the Trojan War* tapestries supplied to European patrons by Pasquier Grenier during this era. We do not know whether Sixtus was responsible for commissioning the *Franciscan Tree* tapestry that includes his portrait in the center, flanked by eminent Franciscan saints and doctors of the church (cat. no. 4). This rare panel may provide an example of the type and quality of the finer custom-made Netherlandish tapestries that were imported for Italian patrons in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

The papal collections continued to grow under Innocent VIII (pope 1484–92). The 1518 inventory listed more than thirty-two pieces with his arms; however, he was certainly not responsible for acquiring them all because they included the six *Hannibal* tapestries that had been presented to Paul II in 1466. Apart from that set, the growing vogue in Netherlandish tapestries for classical subjects is reflected in a number of such panels in Innocent's collection, which, in addition to the inevitable Old and New Testament subjects, included two large pieces of *Lars Porsena* and one large panel of *Tullius Hostilius*, a legendary king of the early Romans, of which comparable pieces are recorded in the collections of Guillaume Hugonet (d. 1477), chancellor of Charles the Bold, and Edward IV (purchased 1480).<sup>73</sup> The scale and splendor of the papal collection by the end of the fifteenth century are reflected in descriptions of the tapestries lining the streets for the coronation of the Borgia pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503).

The magnificence of the papal collection was further augmented by Julius II (pope 1503–13), who seems to have been responsible for some very high-quality acquisitions, including the set that hung in the "anticamera," to which Michiel compared, in 1519, Pope Leo's *Acts of the Apostles*. The subject is not specified, but as Smit has suggested, Michiel's reference was probably to a four-

piece ensemble, listed in the 1518 papal inventory, of the *Story of Heliodorus*, with Julius's arms. Presumably, it had been acquired for the chamber of that name, and presumably it suggested the subject of Raphael's frescoes, painted in 1511–14.<sup>74</sup> That we have absolutely no information about the place of manufacture, the designer, or the iconography of this once-famous set, which seems to have been an important precedent for Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles*, is a reminder of just how little we know about contemporary tapestry patronage. Other acquisitions under Julius included sets of the *Patient Griselda* and an extended series of the *Apostles' Creed*, the latter possibly woven from a well-known design series of this subject.<sup>75</sup> Although these tapestries are lost, an indication of the quality of the finer pieces in Julius II's collection may be provided by an exquisite gold- and silk-woven tapestry of the *Adoration of the Infant Christ* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) that corresponds exactly to the detailed description of an antependium presented by Julius to the basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.<sup>76</sup> A second panel, the *Mystical Grapes* (Vatican Museums), of about 1505–10, is traditionally said to have been a gift to Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, from Julius II, while it has recently been suggested that Julius himself may also be represented in a high-quality tapestry of the *Pentecost* (Floors Castle, Kelso).<sup>77</sup>

#### TASTE AND PERCEPTION

The preceding discussion has examined the considerable demand among Italian patrons for Netherlandish tapestries during the second half of the fifteenth century and the character of the products they could obtain, whether they were purchasing from stock or commissioning designs. It has also considered the development of a number of Italian workshops that were primarily concerned with the production of decorative and fairly coarse furnishing tapestries but of which some, with sufficient funding, were capable of producing more ambitious figurative tapestries from designs by Italian artists like Tura and Mantegna. Evidence of the extent to which the richer Italian patrons had a variety of options by the middle of the fifteenth century raises an important question: To what extent were Italian patrons conscious of a distinction between the style and subject matter of Netherlandish products and those which they might obtain from designs by native artists?

In a recent survey of the market for Netherlandish painting in Italy during the fifteenth century, Christiansen demonstrated that during the first three quarters of the century, Italian patrons were among the foremost enthusiasts for the work of Netherlandish masters.<sup>78</sup> We have noted that Leonello d'Este and Alfonso V of Aragon collected works by leading contemporary Netherlandish painters, and the esteem in which Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der

Weyden were held by sophisticated Italian patrons is reflected by their inclusion in the *De viris illustribus* (along with Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello), a celebration of the famous men of the day written by Bartolomeo Fazio for Alfonso V of Aragon in 1456. Large numbers of Netherlandish paintings were imported into Italy during the fifteenth century, and numerous transactions demonstrate the continuing regard in which these early masters of oil painting were held. In 1460 Francesco Sforza sent a Milanese painter to study with Rogier in Brussels, and the condottiere Federico da Montefeltro, who, as patron of Piero della Francesca and creator of the Gubbio *studiolo*, is often taken as the epitome of the Italian Renaissance taste, was, according to his biographer, Vespasiano da Bisticci, compelled to send to Flanders for a master (Joos van Gent) "because he could not find in Italy painters in oil to suit his taste."<sup>79</sup> Of 142 paintings listed in various Medici residences in 1492, 42 were Netherlandish. Yet, as Christiansen also showed, this unquestioning enthusiasm was gradually eroded in the late fifteenth century as Italian artists and connoisseurs began to take increasing delight in the art and literature of the antique world, moving away from a conception of painting as a virtuoso exercise in mimesis and expression of emotions toward a more theoretically based concept of *disegno* and beauty. While large numbers of Netherlandish paintings continued to be exported to Italy, they were increasingly perceived to be distinct from native styles of representation, as reflected by the frequency with which such pieces were described by the turn of the century in contemporary documentation as "alla ponentina" (from the west).<sup>80</sup>

Do we find a parallel development in the taste of Italian patrons for Netherlandish tapestry toward the end of the century? One important document that has had a disproportionate and misleading influence on discussion of this subject is Angelo Decembrio's *De politia litteraria*. This purports to present a dialogue between its author and Leonello d'Este on a range of topics; it contains a section in which Leonello launches into a diatribe on the arts, arguing for greater attention to classical sources and correct anatomy, and against overloaded detail and decorative costumes. Leonello singles out Northern tapestries for criticism because they attend only to chromatic effects and the quality of the weaving, not to the "scienza della pittura," and because they were concerned above all with effects of splendor and represented *folies* and popular legends without reference to antique sources. As examples of these faults, he cites two tapestries: the *Story of Pope Gregory* in which the head of the emperor Trajan is shown speaking centuries after his death; and a romanticized *Story of Alexander* that takes no account of the biography written by Quinto Curzio.<sup>81</sup>

In publishing this dialogue, Baxandall interpreted this damning assessment as the clearest expression of a sophisticated fifteenth-century Italian response to the fantasy and extravagance of Netherlandish tapestry, an assumption that was reiterated, with some qualification, in an influential publication by Forti Grazzini.<sup>82</sup> Yet, as Forti Grazzini has more recently contended in revision of his earlier opinion, Baxandall's interpretation of the document was probably based on an erroneous assumption of authenticity.<sup>83</sup> The views attributed to Leonello fit strangely with the large sums of money that he spent on tapestry acquisitions such as the *Story of Hercules*, which was conceived in terms of a medieval romance. According to Forti Grazzini, the likely explanation for this dichotomy is that the section on tapestries was not included in Decembrio's original text, which he seems to have begun by 1447; rather, it may have been part of an expansion to the text written in 1462 and inserted twelve years after Leonello's death. None of the tapestry subjects cited in this text corresponds to any tapestry listed in the Este collection. Rather, the subjects correspond to a group of designs that are thought to have been woven in the mid-to late 1450s. The description of the *Trajan* tapestry in conjunction with mention of the *Story of Pope Gregory* invites comparison with the design that combined these subjects, probably woven after Rogier's paintings in the Brussels town hall, known from a weaving with the arms of Georges de Saluces (d. 1461), bishop of Lausanne (fig. 27). The reference to the romanticized version of the *Story of Alexander* invites comparison with the designs of this subject that the Greniers took to Milan to show the Sforza in 1459. As Decembrio was prominent in the Ferrarese court, acting as an ambassador to Spain in 1458 and to Rome in 1462, it seems quite plausible that he may have seen the Grenier drawings in 1459 or a completed commission in 1461. In either case, the question of the divergence from the classical sources of the subject matter of contemporary *Alexander* tapestry designs is much more likely to have been a topic of conversation in Ferrara and Milan about 1460 than in Leonello's court in 1450. On the basis of this, Forti Grazzini suggested that the opinions recorded in the *De politia litteraria* were not those of Leonello, but rather of Decembrio himself, who would have had more than a passing interest in this subject because his brother Pier Candido probably authored a translation in 1438 of Quinto Curzio's *Vita di Alessandro Magno*.

Where does this leave us? Although the opinions expressed in the *De politia litteraria* may not have been those of Leonello or Borso d'Este, they evidently expressed those of one of the leading humanist thinkers at the Ferrarese court. How influential were they? The large sums that Borso continued to spend on Netherlandish tapestries suggest that he may not have shared Decembrio's concerns,



but can we find evidence that Decembrio's opinions gained wider currency elsewhere? Is frustration with the character of imported goods manifested in the commissions placed with Netherlandish ateliers for tapestries woven from Italian designs or in the creation of Italian ateliers at which Italian designs could be woven locally? This question is a large and complex one, requiring further research. But, generally speaking, if the commissions that Borso and Alfonso d'Este and Ludovico II Gonzaga placed with artists like Tura and Mantegna demonstrate a desire to obtain designs in a native style, there is little evidence that this had a negative impact on the continuing demand for Netherlandish tapestries. In 1462 Giorgio della Strada praised Leonello's *Hercules* chamber from Bruges and that of a locally produced chamber in the same breath, and the number of Netherlandish tapestries acquired by the Ferrarese, Mantuan, papal, Umbrian, and Florentine rulers during the 1470s, 1480s, and 1490s are hardly indicative of a flagging interest in the medium.

How then do we explain the continuing appetite for a medium whose style would have been so obviously divergent from fashionable tastes by the late fifteenth century? While the answers will vary from patron to patron and from court to court, one important factor is probably to be found in the distinction between the tapestry medium and the arts in which the new humanist taste for antique and Neoplatonic imagery first manifested itself, particularly medals, drawings, and paintings created for private enjoyment. Whereas the latter were collectibles, and thus highly susceptible to the fashion and tastes of an educated elite, tapestries were essentially furnishings. Large numbers of Netherlandish tapestries had been imported to Italy since the late fourteenth century, and by the time Italian humanists and artists like Decembrio and Mantegna were articulating a distinction between their own aims and those of Northern artists, tapestry was already so well established as a *traditional* form of display and decoration that it is probably safe to assume that, in many cases, an old-fashioned style of design might have been quite acceptable, even desirable. Even among the most discriminating patrons, a nostalgic enjoyment of medieval chivalry and Burgundian splendor may have been an important element in the tapestry patronage of some of the leading buyers of the late fifteenth century. For example, the inventory of Lorenzo de' Medici (d. 1492) records some one hundred tapestries of which about thirty-five were large wall hangings and *spalliere*. Along with the *spalliere* of the *Triumphs* commissioned by Giovanni de' Medici in 1453 were a large tapestry of the *Hunt of the Duke of Burgundy*, two large pieces depicting a tournament, and five or six devotional panels, one of which was said to depict the Annunciation with the Burgundian duke. Although we do not know how,

and with what regularity, such pieces were used, Schneebalg-Perelman may well have been correct that the continuing presence of such pieces in the Medici collection may demonstrate a latent admiration for the style and magnificence of the Burgundian court and the Netherlandish tapestries that were so intimately associated with that splendor.<sup>84</sup>

Another factor that must have played an important part in the readiness or otherwise of Italian patrons to commission Italian designs would, of course, have been the logistics and cost of such commissions. Frescoes and oil paintings were a fraction of the cost of a set of tapestries purchased from stock, and the preparation of custom-made cartoons only increased that cost. Furthermore, tapestry was not an especially intimate art form. Thus, it was perhaps not among the arts on which the leading patrons of the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries—and the artists who served them—focused their attentions as they shared in the rediscovery of the theory and vocabulary of the antique world, and in the development of a new aesthetic lexicon. Inevitably, it was in art forms that could be produced locally and with relative ease, particularly drawing, painting, sculpture, and literature, that these new forms manifested themselves, while the more cumbersome practices and conventions associated with tapestry production provided a certain resistance to such change.

Yet, if these factors go some way toward explaining why the leading patrons of the 1490s and early 1500s continued to use and purchase Netherlandish tapestries of an increasingly foreign character, the evidence has not been sufficiently sifted for a more nuanced understanding of the various issues affecting the response of figures such as Alfonso and Isabella d'Este to the tapestry medium at this time. And although the documentation is very partial, evidence that more Italian designs than we realize may have been commissioned from the Netherlands and produced in Italy is suggested by analogy with previous and subsequent periods; by the evidence of Michiel's passing reference to noteworthy tapestries purchased by Julius II and the kings of Naples; and by a handful of extant tapestries produced in Italy during the early years of the sixteenth century.

Some of these are of a very modest scale. A panel of the *Pentecost* (cat. no. 10), dating from the late 1490s or early 1500s, and woven from a design attributed to Lazzaro Bastiani (fl. 1449–1512), is thought to have been made in a workshop in Venice or the Veneto. Probably woven by a single weaver, it is perhaps typical of the sort of small-scale production that may well have been done in workshops in a number of Italian cities during these years. An example of the continuing presence of itinerant Netherlandish weavers in Italy during this era is provided by two weavers, a Lionello and a

Zoanne Tedesco, who are recorded as working for the cathedral of San Petronio in Bologna between 1497 and 1503. Zoanne wove a *spalliera* decorated with plants and flowers and was then paid for adding medallions with patron saints. He was subsequently commissioned to make other small tapestries for the cathedral, of which two fragments survive, one depicting Saint Petronius, the other a trompe l'oeil book, evidently part of a lectern cover (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Lionello and Zoanne may be identical with two weavers of these names who subsequently appeared in documents as working for the cathedral of Modena from 1510.<sup>85</sup>

While such products are modest, they provide an indication of the sort of small-scale activity that may have been more widespread in Italy at this time. Evidence that there may also have been activity on a more significant scale is provided by one outstanding set of tapestries, the Trivulzio *Months* (see cat. no. 11). These were woven between about 1503 and 1509, from designs by Bartolomeo Suardi, called il Bramantino, for Gian Giacomo Trivulzio at a workshop established for this purpose at Vigevano near Milan under the direction of a weaver named Benedetto da Milano. That Benedetto and his assistants were capable of producing such a

remarkable set certainly raises the possibility that they had undertaken sizable commissions before this for other patrons. The Trivulzio *Months* is the earliest surviving set of tapestries in which the key elements of Italian Renaissance aesthetics and thought were applied to a full-scale tapestry series, as opposed to smaller, picture-size panels. Synthesizing a broad spectrum of antique and modern sources, the set appears to have been intended as a celebration of the peace and prosperity that Trivulzio's leadership had brought to Milan following his capture of the city for the French in 1499. The complex iconography of this set provides an important demonstration of the extent to which some patrons and artists appear to have developed a more ambitious vision of the role that Italian-designed tapestries might play in contemporary court life, ten years or so before Pope Leo's commission to Raphael. Given the paucity of extant documentation, it is very difficult to assess the degree to which the Trivulzio *Months* was extraordinary and seminal in its own time, but in terms of scale and complexity, it may well have marked a new departure in the Italian vision of the tapestry medium, providing an important precedent for Julius II's *Heliodorus* commission (if such it was) and Leo X's *Acts of the Apostles*.

1. Forti Grazzini 2002.
2. For a survey of fifteenth-century Netherlandish tapestries in Italy, see Forti Grazzini 1990a. For Italian weaving, see esp. Göbel 1933–34; Viale Ferrero 1961a; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 98–114; Forti Grazzini 1982b; Forti Grazzini 2002; Smit 2002.
3. *Liber Pontificalis* 1955–57, vol. 1, p. 499, vol. 2, pp. 13, 54, 62, 79, 111; Shearman 1972, pp. 6–7.
4. Lestocquoy 1978, p. 23.
5. Braghirolli 1881, pp. 7, 8, 41–43; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 105.
6. Müntz 1878–82, vol. 1, p. 63; Smit 1993a, p. 21; Mechelen 2000, p. 27.
7. “[D]iversis figuris ramagiorum, arborum, animalium, avium, pratorum, ripieriarum, nubium et hujusmodi, ut est moris et decencie dictae artis. Et in medio cujuslibet peciae debent poni arma dicti domini mei camerarii, de eodem opere facta”; Müntz 1878–82, vol. 2, p. 310.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 310–12; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 108.
9. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 16–25.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 21; E. Duverger in Bruges 1987, p. 38.
11. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 16–18.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 29–34.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 30; Christiansen 1998, p. 40.
14. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 31–32.
15. Forti Grazzini 1991a; Bulst 1993.
16. Steppe 1961, p. 304; E. Duverger in Bruges 1987, p. 47.
17. Smit 1993b, p. 58, no. 7.
18. Gilbert 1980, p. 110.
19. “[M]igliore maestro di questi paesi”; “visti e molto bene intesi i vostri disegni e la vostra intenzione”; Grunzweig 1931, pp. 26–31; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 90–91.
20. Grunzweig 1931, pp. 38–43; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 90–92. For the 1463 and 1465 inventories of Piero's goods, see Spallanzani 1996, pp. 100–104.
21. Lestocquoy 1978, p. 92.
22. Grunzweig 1931, pp. 78–84.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
24. “[T]utta questa terra si puo dire è bisognato l'abbi viste e ciaschuno s'achorda che mai viddè il più bello e migliore hovraggio”; Grunzweig 1931, pp. 98–100; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 93.
25. Grunzweig 1931, pp. 101–3; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 94.
26. Lestocquoy 1978, p. 93.
27. Vayra 1884, pp. 9–248; Schneebalg-Perelman 1971b, pp. 33–35.
28. “[C]ausa portandi et ostendendi certum designum regis Alesandri et certas alias tapezarias Ill.mo domino”; Forti Grazzini 1991a, p. 61; Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer 1998.
29. McKendrick 1991, p. 51; Raggio 1999, pp. 67–69, 185.
30. Braghirolli 1881, pp. 11–14; Göbel 1928, pp. 402–7; Adelson in Grove 1996, vol. 20, p. 323; Smit 2002.
31. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 16.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–39.
33. Cecchini 1962, p. 171; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 108–9.
34. Müntz 1876a, p. 174; Müntz 1878–82, vol. 1, p. 180; Smit 1993a, p. 22.
35. Müntz 1876a, p. 174, n. 2; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 109; Smit 1993a, p. 22.
36. Müntz 1876a, p. 175; Müntz 1878–82, vol. 1, pp. 181–82; Smit 1993a, p. 22.
37. Müntz 1876a, p. 177; Müntz 1878–82, vol. 1, pp. 318–19; Smit 1993a, pp. 23, 25, 261–63.
38. Adelson 1990, p. 17.
39. “[V]ir utique probus et artifex excellentissimus in contexendis mirabilique artificio figurarum componendis pannis thapetalibus”; Conti 1875, pp. 95–96; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 106; Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 29; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 88.
40. Biscaro 1916, pp. 194–95.
41. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 106–7, 110–11; Smit 1995.
42. Smit 1995, pp. 185–86.
43. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 35, 215–26.



44. Ibid., p. 32.
45. Ibid., p. 38.
46. Ibid., pp. 37–38; Forti Grazzini 1991a, p. 53; Cavallo 1993, pp. 190–97, no. 9.
47. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 41.
48. “La camera et guardacamera dell’Ill. S.r mio sono apparate de razi bellissimi. In la camera gè un apparamento che comproe el marchese Leonello, che sono facte a certe istorie de Hercules pur de razi, che questoro che se ne intendono dicono che l’è degna cosa. Quelli de la guardacamera sono facti a Ferrara a la divisa sua cum anzoli che la tene, che nel vero non poteriano essere più belli, nè più vistosi”; Braghirolli 1881, p. 17.
49. “[M]aestri solenni et perfectissimi de l’arte dela tapezaria ad introdurre in dicta citade epsa arte de tapezaria, et banchali, et insegnarla ad qualunque persona la vogliano imparare”; Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 41.
50. Ibid., pp. 34–35.
51. Ibid., pp. 43–44.
52. Ibid., pp. 51–52.
53. Ibid., p. 53.
54. Ibid., p. 55.
55. Braghirolli 1881, p. 21.
56. Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 14.
57. C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 35.
58. Braghirolli 1881, pp. 21–23; Göbel 1928, p. 405.
59. Braghirolli 1881, p. 19.
60. Signorini 1985, pp. 249–51, 301–2; C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 35.
61. Cicogna 1860, p. 405; Smit 1993b, p. 58, n. 3.
62. C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 215.
63. Braghirolli 1881, p. 25; Lestocquoy 1978, p. 105; C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 33–36, 43, n. 11.
64. Baxandall 1964, p. 104, n. 37; Baxandall 1971, p. 108; Smit 1993b, pp. 49–50, 58; Wolfthal 1989, p. 15.
65. Müntz 1876a, p. 177; Müntz 1878–82, vol. 1, pp. 318–19; Smit 1993a, pp. 23, 25, 261–63.
66. Müntz 1878–82, vol. 1, pp. 326–27; Smit 1993a, pp. 261–63.
67. “[C]ontra del re Porto de India con gente d’arme de cavalo et da piede tuti armati et alifanti con castele adosso et li omini che combatano; con molti de loro, feriti de vertuni, pareano essere vivi, li omini e cavali tanti erano naturalmente bene lavorati”; Chambers 1992, p. 82, n. 248.
68. Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer 1998.
69. Chambers 1992, pp. 106, 150–54.
70. Müntz 1878–82, vol. 2, pp. 125–26; Smit 1993a, p. 26.
71. Müntz 1878–82, vol. 2, p. 121; Smit 1993a, p. 26.
72. Müntz 1878–82, vol. 3, pp. 262–63.
73. Müntz 1898, pp. 121–31; McKendrick 1987.
74. Smit 1993b, pp. 54–55.
75. Smit 1993b.
76. Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 42.
77. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 66, 78.
78. Christiansen 1998.
79. Ibid., p. 41, citing Vespasiano da Bisticci, *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, trans. William George Waters and Emily Waters (reprint of 1963 ed., Toronto, 1997), p. 101.
80. Christiansen 1998, pp. 48–54.
81. Baxandall 1963, pp. 317, 319; Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 11, 14, n. 9.
82. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 10.
83. Forti Grazzini 1991a, pp. 61–62.
84. Müntz 1888, pp. 59–61, 83–94, 106–7; Schneeberg-Perelman 1971b, pp. 28–29.
85. Smit 1995.

7.

## The Crucifixion and the Lamentation

From a set of the *Passion of Christ*

Design attributed to Niccolò di Pietro,

between 1408 and 1427

Probably woven by Netherlandish weavers working in Venice, ca. 1420–30

Wool

220 x 452 cm (6 ft. 2 1/4 in. x 14 ft. 10 in.)

7–8 warps per cm

Museo della Basilica di San Marco, Venice

**PROVENANCE:** Ca. 1420–30, presumably woven for the Basilica of San Marco; presumably among tapestries included in the general count of the Basilica collection in 16th- and early 17th-century inventories; probably to be identified with a group of *Passion* tapestries listed in the 1686 and early 18th-century inventories with information that they were hung in the sacristy for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday each year; certainly identifiable with *Passion* tapestries listed in 1745 and subsequent inventories; apparently in ceremonial use until 1823; 1887, restored; 1901–1981, displayed in the Basilica museum; 1982–94, restored in Florence; 1999, installed in the new Museo della Basilica di San Marco.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Urbani de Gheltof 1878, pp. 9–18; Ackerman 1925–26; Gallo 1926, pp. 23–27; Longhi 1946, p. 47; Pallucchini 1956; Pallucchini 1971, pp. 242–44; Stucky-Schürer 1972 (with bibliog.); Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 111–12; Christiansen 1986, pp. 110–11; De Marchi 1997; Dolcini 1997; Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 1–107, 175–91.

**CONDITION:** At some point in its history all the tapestries in the set were reversed, and the ends of the weft threads were sewn back into the fabric of the tapestry. Extensive restoration was undertaken in 1887, at which time large damaged areas appear to have been removed altogether and replaced with painted patches. The set was restored again in Florence between 1982 and 1994. During this campaign the set was restored to its correct orientation and areas of loss were rewoven. The Crucifixion scene was largely rewoven in the lower right corner, as were areas of the Virgin's cloak. In the Lamentation, one of the better-preserved sections of the *Passion* set, the largest portion of reweaving is in the rocks at the right and in the areas just inside the guard borders.<sup>2</sup>

Despite a considerable market for tapestries in Italy during the first third of the fifteenth century, very few are extant today. The survival of this large *Passion* sequence is all the more remarkable because of its early date, size, design, and condition. Thought to have been woven by Netherlandish weavers in Venice, it



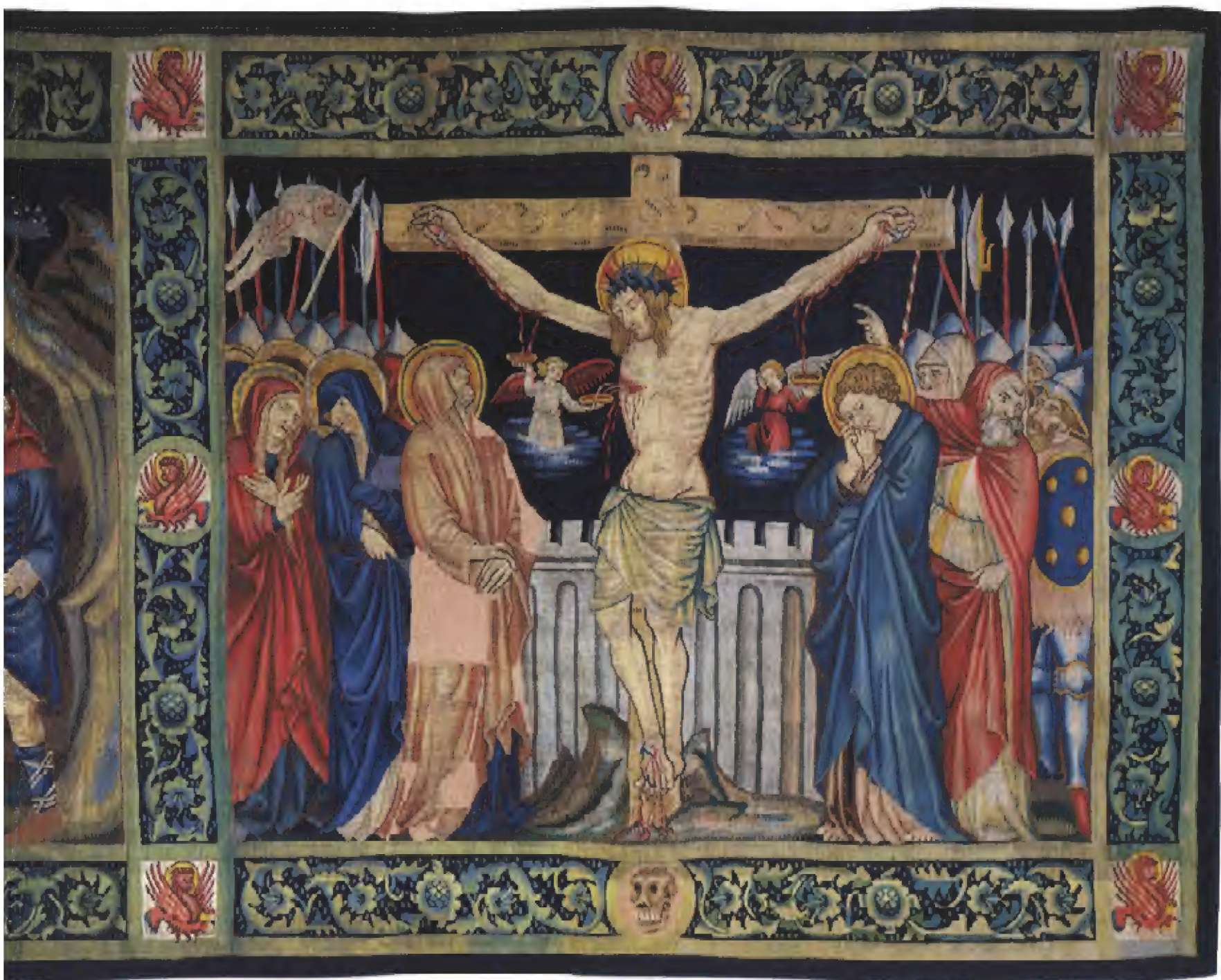
is the earliest known example of a set of tapestries woven from what were evidently Italian cartoons. The design is in marked contrast to that of contemporary Netherlandish production and is closely related to the work of artists active in Venice in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Despite extensive losses in the past and considerable modern reweaving, the panel depicting Christ's Crucifixion and the Lamentation retains much of its original impact in terms of both the bold use of

blocks of colors and the simple monumentality of the design.

### Description and Iconography

The San Marco set of the *Passion of Christ* is composed of four tapestries that depict thirteen scenes in ten separate sections, each framed by a border. The first tapestry depicts five events within three sections: the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden, the Arrest of Christ, Jesus before Caiaphas, and the Flagellation. The second





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shows Jesus before Pilate and Christ Carrying the Cross. The third, the one discussed here, depicts the Crucifixion and the Lamentation. The fourth shows the Resurrection, the mourning women at the empty tomb, Jesus appearing to Thomas, the "Noli me tangere," and Jesus appearing to the apostles.

Like all the tapestries in the set, the narrative sequence of catalogue number 7 reads from right to left. The right-hand scene depicts the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:35–50; Mark 15:24–37;

Luke 23:33–46; John 19:18–30). The scene is dominated by the figure of Christ on the cross. The nails by which he is attached to the cross protrude prominently from his hands and feet, and blood flows in small rivulets from these wounds and the spear wound in his side (John 19:34). That from his hands and side is collected in gold cups by two angels that flank Christ's body, an allusion to the eucharistic celebration of Christ's sacrifice, as foretold by Isaiah (63:3). The cross is flanked by two groups of figures.

The Virgin stands in the foreground of the left group, gazing up at Christ with rapt attention. His head is turned toward her according to the ancient tradition of the *Christus patiens*, which depicts Christ turning to his mother as he bears his pain.<sup>3</sup> The three Marys stand behind the Virgin, while Saint John stands at the forefront of the group to the right. Next to Saint John a bearded man is conversing with a soldier as he points toward Christ, an allusion to the centurion and onlookers who recognized Christ as





Detail of cat. no. 7

the Son of God at the moment of Christ's death (Matthew 27:54). Above their heads a mass of helmets and spears (one carrying a banner with the inscription *SPQR*, the Senate and the People of Rome) suggests a throng of soldiers. The wall that appears behind the cross represents the city walls of Jerusalem. The roundel in the center of the border below Christ's feet contains a skull, that of Adam, which was often included in medieval Crucifixion scenes as a reminder of the original sin that necessitated Christ's sacrifice and because, according to medieval legend, Adam was buried under Golgotha. Christ's body is larger than those of the attendant figures, and the image is made all the more

striking by the way in which the mourning figures are massed to either side of the cross, so that the upper part of Christ's torso and the cross provide a striking silhouette against the dark ground.

The left scene depicts the Lamentation. Like the previous scene it is dominated by the cross that rises in the center, with the stains of Christ's blood clearly visible on the wood. The Virgin, now clothed in a blue robe (in the previous scene she was dressed in white), cradles Christ's head in her arms, with the help of Saint John. She kisses her son on the lips, her eyes fixed intently on his, according to the description of this event in Pseudo-Bonaventura's

*Meditationes vitae Christi*. The weight of Christ's body is supported by the three Marys, one of whom kisses his hand while Mary Magdalen cradles and kisses his feet (as per the description in the *Meditationes*). The halos of the mourners are differentiated by decorative elements that do not conform to those in the previous scene, suggesting that the variation in color in the cloaks of the mourners is also not to be interpreted as a consistent indication of identity. To the rear, Joseph of Arimathea (in whose sepulcher Christ was laid to rest) holds the ladder, while Nicodemus carries the nails that held Christ to the cross and the hammer with which he removed them. In the background



the cross is flanked on either side by rocky outcrops with scrubby bushes, an arrangement that echoes the massing of the crowd in the previous scene and heightens the visual impact of the cross and the bloody stains that it bears.<sup>4</sup>

The scenes are surrounded by a border composed of a frieze of scrolling acanthus leaves and stylized flowers, green on blue, with squares and roundels in the corners and centers depicting a winged lion emerging from water, with the Gospels clasped between its front paws, the *leone in moleca* of Venice (symbol of Saint Mark the Evangelist).

As previous commentators have noted, although the design retains elements of a Byzantine tradition, such as the presentation of Christ as a figure larger than those around him, the narrative is largely devoid of the traditional symbolic content of the Byzantine tradition.<sup>5</sup> Instead, the narrative is based on a repertory of scenes that developed in northern Italy and Germany during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries under the influence of such meditative studies as Pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditationes vitae Christi*, in which the focus is on elements of Christ's Passion that relate to the eucharistic ceremonies (most obviously in the angels collecting Christ's blood).<sup>6</sup> The treatment of the subject in the Italian tradition differs from that which characterizes contemporary northern European representations, in which the tendency was toward a more graphic presentation of the brutal details of Christ's suffering and torture (as demonstrated, for example, in the contemporaneous Netherlandish scenes of the *Passion of Christ* now at La Seo, Saragossa).<sup>7</sup> The San Marco *Passion* cycle is unique among early fifteenth-century tapestries in that it has a border, a feature that appears to have been inspired by contemporary frescoes, like those in the Cappella degli Innocenti in Santa Caterina in Treviso by Niccolò di Pietro, one of the artists to whom the design of the series has been plausibly attributed.<sup>8</sup>

The original arrangement of the San Marco *Passion* cycle has been the subject of much discussion. Writing in the early 1970s, Stucky-Schürer recognized that the orientation of all the tapestries had been reversed at some point in their history.<sup>9</sup> The reason for this reversal is unknown, but it may have been because the

front of the tapestries had become faded through continuous exposure.<sup>10</sup> Alternatively, the reversal may have been occasioned by a change in the location in which the set was hung, rendering a reading from left to right more appropriate. Stucky-Schürer suggested that the *Passion* set originally comprised two tapestries, each composed of five sections. The recent restoration of the set revealed that the tapestries were actually woven in four separate panels, as evidenced by the difference in height and the variation in the warp count among the different panels.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Patron and Original Location*

The earliest record of the San Marco *Passion* tapestries dates from the seventeenth century, when they were recorded in the sacristy of the Basilica. Early commentators assumed that they arrived among a collection of twenty-eight tapestries that were bequeathed to the Basilica in 1501 by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Zen, but this suggestion can probably be discounted as they are not among items listed in an inventory taken at his death.<sup>12</sup> Although the earlier whereabouts of the set is undocumented, the motif of the *leone in moleca* in the center and corners of each of the borders, combined with the absence of any other heraldic elements, has led subsequent commentators to assume that the commission for the set must have originated directly from the Procuratore di San Marco or the Signoria Dogal, rather than from a specific doge or Venetian family. As Stucky-Schürer first noted, such a commission would have been highly appropriate. Venice was the gateway for western Europeans making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the cult of the Holy Sepulcher was celebrated there with some elaboration until well into the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> With its emphasis on the dramatic events immediately preceding and following the Crucifixion (including the appearance of the angel to the mourning women at the sepulcher), the set would thus have been especially appropriate for celebrations relating to the cult at the Basilica.

The sizes of the four *Passion* tapestries, two long and two short panels, indicate that from its conception the set was intended for a specific location within the Basilica of San Marco. By the time the tapestries can be plausibly identified in seventeenth-century documentation, they were located in the sacristy, which led Stucky-

Schürer to assume that they were made as decorations for this venue. Our knowledge of the dimensions and construction of the original sacristy is limited because it was destroyed by fire and reconstructed in 1486. As Dolcini has recently argued, however, this may be a moot point because it is not certain that the celebrations associated with the cult of the Holy Sepulcher incorporated the sacristy until a date later than the conception of the tapestries. Comparing the common practice in other medieval religious institutions, Dolcini has suggested that the tapestries are more likely to have been made for display in the choir of the Basilica during Passion week.<sup>14</sup> Their removal to the sacristy was probably instigated by the creation of a new set of the *Story of Saint Mark*. This set was woven in Florence from designs by Jacopo Sansovino between 1550 and 1553 and was indeed used in the Basilica's choir,<sup>15</sup> which provides circumstantial evidence for the location and the role played by the earlier set in the preceding period. The similar dimensions of the two sets, both comprising two long and two short pieces, also support a choir location for the *Passion*. The *Saint Mark* set is 21 meters long, and the *Passion* set is 23 meters long.<sup>16</sup>

Although many precious objects from the sacristy were sold or burned to extract their metallic thread content to raise money for repairs to the Basilica in the early nineteenth century, the *Passion* cycle, woven only in wool, seems to have escaped notice.

#### *Design*

The tapestry demonstrates certain traits that link it to early fifteenth-century Netherlandish tapestry production, such as the character of the leaves on the stylized shrubs in the background and the small lines and whorls executed in striated half-tones to represent the grain of the wood of the cross. The design lacks, however, the decorative and graphically brutal details that characterize northern European representations of the Passion during the early medieval period. It also lacks the narrative device common to many Netherlandish tapestries of this era whereby individual scenes are separated one from another by landscape details. Instead, it combines elements of two other visual traditions, of which the most predominant is a Byzantine formula adopted by Venetian artists during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.



Detail of cat. no. 7

This influence manifests itself in various ways: the pared-down, monumental style of the figures; the contrast in scale between the figure of Christ and the lesser figures; the boldly colored backgrounds; the limited and schematic representation of architecture; and the iceberglike rocks.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the design demonstrates elements of the International Gothic style as manifested in the work of such artists as Antonio Pisanello and Gentile da Fabriano, in particular some of the decorative details in the architecture, the bold conceptualization of figures, and the individualization of facial expressions and hand gestures.

This mix of influences is especially marked in the Crucifixion scene, in which the balanced,

simple composition with the cross in front of the city wall derives from a Byzantine tradition taken over by Venetian artists, one demonstrated in a very similar arrangement in the mosaic *Crucifixion* in San Marco that presumably provided one iconographic source for this design.<sup>18</sup> Equally, the articulation of the personal suffering of Christ reflects a later development toward greater emotional intensity and narrative drama. Here, as in the preceding scene, Christ on the way to Calvary, and in the Lamentation, the dramatic emphasis is on the wordless dialogue between Christ and the Virgin.

On the basis of this evidence, previous commentators have generally concurred in attributing the design to a Venetian cartoonist. In

attempting to identify the designer of this series, there has been much debate regarding the possible involvement of two of the leading artists active in Venice in the early fifteenth century. Longhi attributed the design to Zanino di Pietro (Giovanni di Francia, fl. 1389–1448), who worked in Bologna between 1389 and 1406 before moving to Venice, where he directed a highly successful workshop, carrying on a style that reflected the innovations of Gentile da Fabriano.<sup>19</sup> In studies published during the 1950s Pallucchini reattributed the design to Zanino's contemporary Niccolò di Pietro (fl. 1394–1430), noting that its monumental quality and pared-down drama embodied a new departure from the International Gothic of Pisanello and



Gentile.<sup>20</sup> This attribution has generally found favor among recent commentators, such as Stucky-Schürer and De Marchi, although Christiansen retained the attribution to Zanino.<sup>21</sup>

Following the recent conservation of the cycle, with the benefit of the corrected orientation of the tapestries and the greater legibility of the design and detailing, Dolcini developed Pallucchini's line of argument somewhat further. She correctly noted that any assessment of the style of the cartoon design needs to take account of elements that may have been introduced by the weavers as they interpreted the design into a woven form, and that the character of the faces of some of the lesser figures may owe more to the weavers than to the cartoonist. She then elaborated on the similarity between the facial types of the principal figures in the tapestries and those in works by Niccolò di Pietro and on the way that both cartoonist and painter used facial expressions and hand gestures to express the emotional state of the protagonists. The posture, features, and physiognomy of the crucified Christ are also very close to those in a painted Crucifixion attributed to Niccolò di Pietro (*Croce di Verucchio*, Chiesa di Santi Martino e Francesco, Verucchio).<sup>22</sup> The analogies that Dolcini identifies are certainly striking, and in view of Niccolò di Pietro's status and success at the date that the *Passion* tapestries are considered to have been woven, the attribution of the design to him is plausible. Equally, in the absence of documentation and in view of the influence this style may well have had on a number of contemporary artists, it seems wise to retain a question mark in connection with this attribution.

#### *Manufacture and Date*

On the basis of a misreading of the "c" as a "d" on the banner carried by one of the soldiers in the scene of the Arrest of Christ, Ackerman (1925–26) attributed the *Passion* set to the Tournai workshop of Robert Dary. As Gallo subsequently recognized, the letter was actually a "c" for "crucifigatur," as on the Crucifixion mosaic in the Basilica of San Marco.<sup>23</sup> Göbel's suggestion that the tapestry may have been woven in Venice by Netherlandish weavers working for San Marco is one with which most modern commentators have concurred.<sup>24</sup> In her detailed study of the set, Stucky-Schürer explored this idea by analyzing the affinity

between the technical execution of the San Marco *Passion* and contemporary Netherlandish products, such as the La Seo *Passion*, noting, for example, the similar way in which the weavers of these sets rendered the effect of marble and stone (with intermittent striations of red and blue on a tan ground) and the similar rendition of Christ's blood on the cross and the grain of the wood.<sup>25</sup>

The possibility that the San Marco *Passion* may have been woven in Venice gains support from circumstantial evidence published by Urbani de Gheltof in the late nineteenth century. According to a document he found in the Archivio di Stato di Venetia, the art of tapestry weaving was introduced to Venice by Jehan di Bruggia and a Valentino de Raz (Arras) in 1421.<sup>26</sup> Although the location of this document is no longer known, other information that Urbani de Gheltof published about Venetian tapestry production has proved reliable on the basis of comparison with other source documents that he used. In view of the Venetian style of the design, subsequent critics have therefore tended to take 1421 as the terminus post quem for this tapestry. Indeed, although Urbani de Gheltof made no connection between the San Marco *Passion* and these two individuals, many subsequent critics have also attributed the set to this pair of weavers. While the assumption is plausible, subsequent research has not revealed anything further about the men, and we are dependent on Urbani de Gheltof's reference for knowledge of their existence.

If the lost documentation relating to the establishment of a Venetian workshop in 1421 provides a possible terminus post quem for the conception of the San Marco *Passion*, it was probably designed fairly soon after this date because its style appears somewhat old-fashioned and conservative in contrast to treatments of the *Passion* by Venetian artists during the 1430s and 1440s.<sup>27</sup>

Assuming that various early fifteenth-century tapestries could be securely attributed to workshops in Arras, Stucky-Schürer and Dolcini have explored the technical analogies between such tapestries and the San Marco *Passion*.<sup>28</sup> While some of the comparison pieces to which they refer may have been woven in Arras, this is by no means certain. The generic character of the traits in question indicates widespread use in a number of different Netherlandish centers

(from where they were carried to Italy by Netherlandish weavers). Dolcini's suggestion that a tulip-shaped flower that appears at one point in the border may be a maker's signature is unsupported by any analogous evidence in Netherlandish or Italian production.<sup>29</sup> More valuable is Dolcini's observation concerning the considerable variation in the quality of the weaving between different areas of the tapestries, perhaps indicative of the provincial nature of the production and of the collaboration of skilled Netherlandish weavers with relatively unskilled Italian assistants. The tapestries were executed in wool alone and do not include silk, possibly in order to ensure their strength and hardness;<sup>30</sup> alternatively, finances may have been a factor, silk being considerably more expensive than wool. The warp count is relatively high and the quality of the wool is good. The palette of colors is relatively restricted (as in other contemporary tapestries), incorporating approximately twenty different tones. Color is used primarily to ensure legible contrasts between figures and architectural components rather than for verisimilitude or decoration.<sup>31</sup>

1. Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 43–44; Dolcini in Dolcini,

Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 44–45; Vio in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio, pp. 14–21.

2. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 185, 215.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 184–85.

5. Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 13–34; Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 175–91.

6. Dolcini 1997.

7. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 47–51.

8. Stucky-Schürer 1972, p. 37 and pl. 84; Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, p. 175.

9. S. Müller-Christensen in Pallucchini 1971, pp. 241–42; Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 41–42.

10. For an analogous situation in Cardinal Wolsey's collection, see T. Campbell 1996a, p. 99.

11. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 81–82.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 110, n. 9.

13. Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 45–46; Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 43–44.

14. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, p. 44.

15. Meoni 1998, pp. 53–54; Davanzo Poli in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 129–51, 196–203.

16. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, p. 43.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

19. Longhi 1946, p. 47.

20. Pallucchini 1956.

21. Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 118–24; Christiansen 1986, pp. 110–11, 118–24; De Marchi 1997.

22. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 87–93.
23. Gallo 1926; Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, p. 178.
24. Göbel 1928, p. 442.
25. Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 39–40, 105–12.
26. Urbani de Gheltof 1878, p. 14.
27. Christiansen 1986, p. 111.
28. Stucky-Schürer 1972, pp. 105–12; Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 47–72.
29. Dolcini in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 72, 175, 181.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–76.

## 8.

### *The Lamentation*

Design attributed to Cosmè Tura, 1474

Woven in the workshop of Rubinetto di Francia, Ferrara, probably 1474

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt metal-wrapped thread

97 x 207 cm (38¼ x 81½ in.)

8 warps per cm

Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano (T.87)

**PROVENANCE:** 1474, probably woven; probably the altar frontal that Rubinetto di Francia delivered to the Este wardrobe on January 1, 1475; probably the altar frontal showing the dead Christ and the Marys that Ercole I d'Este displayed to visitors on January 27, 1476; probably the altar frontal that Ercole lent to Bradolisi Trotti in 1479; probably the altar frontal recorded in the Este collection up to and including the 1587 inventory of Alfonso II d'Este; before 1908, Vieweg collection, Brunswick; Von Lembach collection, Monaco; Neven-Dumont collection, Cologne; 1963, Thyssen-Bornemisza collection.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Venturi 1908, p. 421; Venturi 1909, p. 207; Ortolani 1941, pp. 76–77; Shepherd 1951; Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 97–103; Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, pp. 246–51; S. J. Campbell 1997, pp. 76, 99–101, 115, 126; Molteni 1999, pp. 127–34; Manca 2000, pp. 38, 64, 103–4, 131–33 (with bibliog.).

**CONDITION:** Good, considering tapestry's age. Much of dark thread in rocky outcrop at right appears to be rewoven, which may account for the difference between the detail of this area and that in the duplicate tapestry in Cleveland, where a horned shape appears above the entrance of the sepulcher.

*The Lamentation* is one of a very small number of surviving fifteenth-century Italian tapestries. It is of additional significance because it can almost certainly be identified with a tapestry for which Ercole I d'Este, duke of Ferrara, paid his



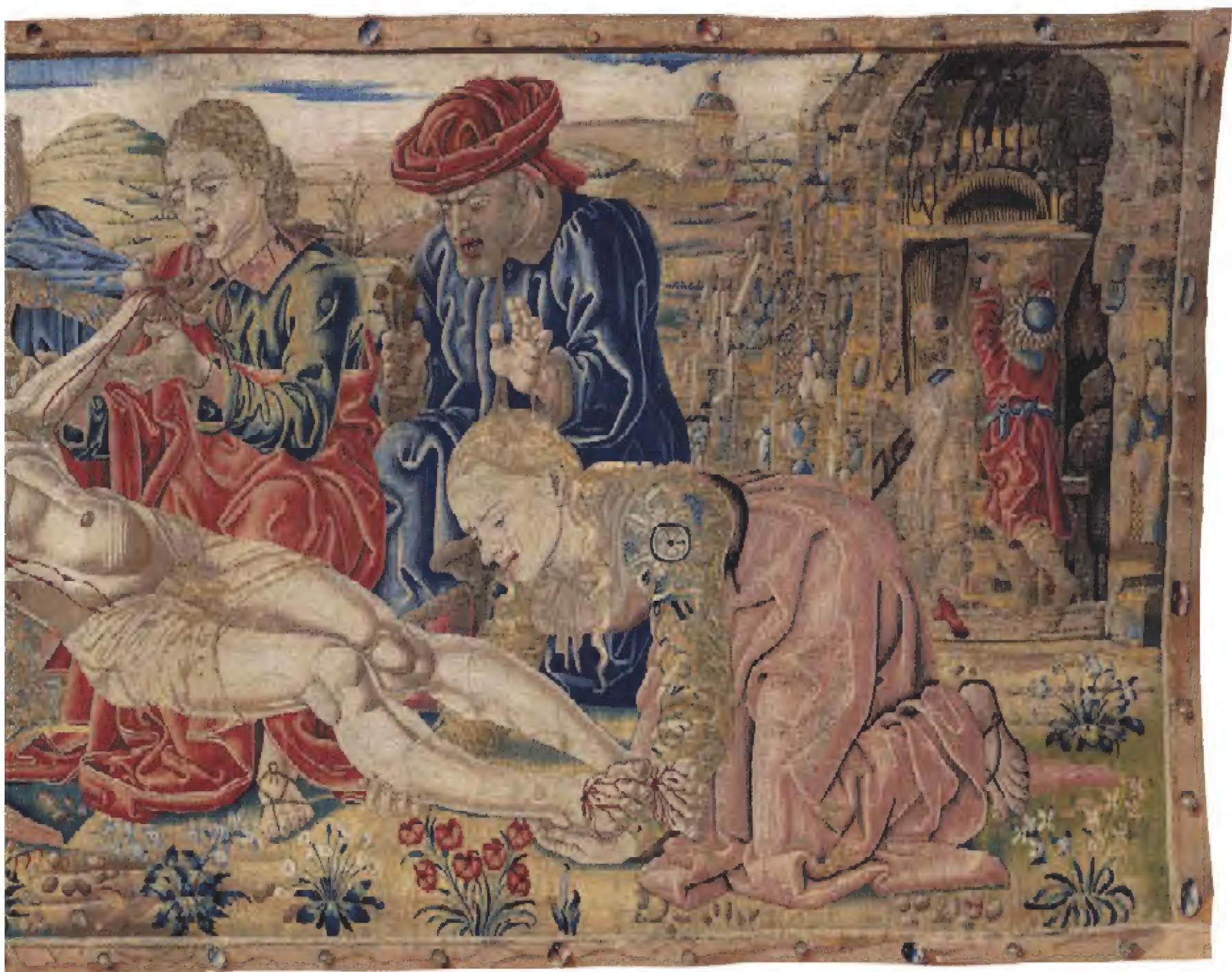
leading tapestry maker, Rubinetto di Francia, at the beginning of 1475, and because its design can be attributed to Ercole's court artist Cosmè Tura on stylistic grounds. The emotional intensity of the design and the emphasis it places on linear and volumetric representation are in marked contrast to the decorative and patterned emphasis of contemporary Netherlandish production. As such, the tapestry anticipates the issues that increasingly occupied Netherlandish and Italian tapestry designers over the next fifty years: both

the representation of space and volume and the balance between verisimilitude and emotional drama. A near duplicate of this design survives at the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 51).

#### *Description*

Woven in the shape of a wide rectangular panel of low height—appropriate for an altar frontal—the tapestry depicts six figures mourning over the body of Christ following the Deposition. The emotional intensity of the scene is heightened





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by the manner in which the figures crowd around Christ's body in a space whose narrow circumference is suggested both by a rocky outcrop that rises immediately behind the figure to the left and by the base of the cross immediately behind the group. The viewer is at eye level with the kneeling mourners. Christ's body is shown at a slight angle to the picture plane, stiff with rigor mortis and spread-eagled in the shape of the cross. His right arm protrudes unsupported in the left foreground, a dramatic

embodiment of the pathos of this scene. His eyelids are heavy and his eyes half open, suggesting sad contemplation rather than death, perhaps a reflection of the contemporary debate regarding the nature of Christ's body between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.<sup>2</sup> Naked save for a cloth around his waist and the crown of thorns, his body is woven in a limited palette of light beige and brown, providing a marmoreal quality to the flesh, which contrasts with the tracery of blood that runs from the

wounds in his palms, side, feet, and forehead. Christ's shoulders rest on the Virgin's knees. Her red eyelids and flushed cheeks contrast with the pallor of her skin. She wears a white headdress and an orange cloak over a blue gown. Her left hand rests passively against Christ's neck, while her right forearm hangs inertly over that of the woman, Mary Salomé or Mary of Cleophas, who is supporting her. The latter is dressed in an elaborately knotted turban and a green velvet dress, slashed at the





Detail of cat. no. 8

side, with puffed sleeves made of red cut-pile velvet. The second Mary, to the right of the Virgin (at the Virgin's left), appears to be stretching her arms wide in a gesture of anguish. She wears a cloak over a sumptuous cloth of-gold bodice that is unlaced over her midsection. Saint John, wearing a red robe over a shot-silk green tunic, kneels beyond her, cradling Christ's left hand and forearm in his hands. Joseph of Arimathea kneels at the right, wearing a red turban and a blue gown and carrying the nails with which Christ was crucified in one hand, the other raised in sorrow. Christ's lower legs and feet are supported by Mary Magdalen, who wears an orange-colored dress with puffed sleeves made from blue cut-pile velvet cloth of gold.

To the right of this main group a rocky hillside is visible where two men are removing a stone slab from the entrance of the sepulcher in which Christ is to be interred. The duplicate weaving of this design now in Cleveland has a pointed or horn shape above the door of the sepulcher, which was probably present on the Thyssen-Bornemisza tapestry and destroyed by later conservation. The horned shape presumably indicates that the sepulcher belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, thus providing an implicit reference to the contrast between the Old Law and the New Law.<sup>3</sup> Immediately to the left of the sepulcher, a round temple is visible on the top of a hill, possibly an allusion to the Temple of Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

A hilly landscape extends behind the heads of the figures in the main group. The narrow space in the foreground is articulated with small pebbles and flowers. The tapestry is surrounded by a trompe l'oeil wood frame set with cabochon jewels.

#### *Patron*

Venturi was the first to identify the tapestry as a product of the Ferrarese workshops from a cartoon by Tura, and he subsequently recognized the likely link between this tapestry and a documented payment to Ercole I d'Este's court tapissier, Rubinetto di Francia (fl. 1457–84), for a tapestry altar frontal woven in wool, silk, and gold (metallic thread) that was delivered to the



Este wardrobe on January 1, 1475.<sup>5</sup> In January of the following year Ercole is known to have displayed a tapestry altar panel of this subject to some visitors in his chambers, a telling demonstration of the interest and pride that he took in the work of his court tapissier.<sup>6</sup>

Ercole I d'Este (1431–1505), duke of Ferrara from 1471, was a pious man who initiated a considerable amount of church building and decoration in Ferrara; his wife, Eleonora of Aragon, whom he married in 1473, was equally devout. Together they commissioned and collected paintings of an intensely religious character.<sup>7</sup> Their spiritual and devout inclinations are most explicitly demonstrated in Guido Mazzoni's terracotta *Lamentation* (1485) in the church of the Gesù in Ferrara, which includes the figures of Ercole and Eleonora as active mourners with the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, Saint John, and Joseph of Arimathea.<sup>8</sup> On the basis of comparison with this group, Ortolani suggested that the representation of John and the woman next to him in the earlier tapestry rendition of the same subject may have been intended as portraits of the duke and his wife.<sup>9</sup> Ortolani also suggested that the figure of Joseph of Arimathea is an image of Acarino, the mythical founder of the Este line, and that the two other Marys may represent Ercole's daughters, Isabella and Beatrice d'Este. In the absence of any distinguishing attribute, the Acarino hypothesis seems fanciful, and the identification of the daughters can be rejected on the likely identification of

this tapestry with one woven in 1474, as the daughters were born in 1474 and 1475, respectively. However, the possibility that Ercole and Eleonora may be represented in the guise of John and one of the Marys has found general, if guarded acceptance, although the stylization of the faces, combined with the transposition of the design into a woven form, prevents any absolute identification.<sup>10</sup> Caution should certainly be exercised, because no mention of such portraits is made in any of the documentary references to this design. Campbell has suggested that the unlaced bodice of the woman identified as Eleonora may be taken as an indication that she is pregnant.<sup>11</sup> If this is correct and if the woman is indeed intended as Eleonora, then this detail would be an allusion to Eleonora's condition when she was carrying Isabella (b. 1474) or Beatrice (b. 1475).

#### Designer

The authorship of Cosmè Tura (1430–1495) is not documented, but the attribution has found widespread acceptance since Venturi first linked his name with this tapestry. Tura had risen to great success under Borso d'Este. He was granted lodgings in the Castello Estense in 1457, and in 1458 he was appointed official court painter. Tura completed his most important commission for Borso, the chapel in the castle of Belriguardo (Voghera; destroyed), in 1471, the year of Borso's death. Tura's stature and wealth at this date are reflected by the first of his wills,

drawn up in that year, with provision for the erection of a church dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian. Although Tura continued to play a major role at the Ferrarese court through the later 1470s, he seems to have fallen out of fashion or become infirm by the mid-1480s, receiving no further commissions after 1485 (nevertheless, he was still listed with Ercole d'Antonio de' Roberti as one of the two leading exemplars of Ferrarese painting in Giovanni Santi's *La vita e le geste di Federico di Montefeltro duca d'Urbino*, ca. 1488–92).

Tura was involved in tapestry production for the Este family from early in his career, but most of this work related to decorative rather than figurative designs. In 1457 he provided designs for an ensemble with armorials and devices, woven by the Netherlander Livino di Giglio, and in 1459–60 he designed tapestries that may have been commissioned for festivities surrounding the visit of Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Another tapestry-related commission is recorded in 1467. Between 1472 and 1474 tapestry design seems to have been among his principal tasks, including in 1472, designs for the tapestry hangings of a marriage bed for Ercole and Eleonora, to be woven by Giovanni Mille and Rubinetto di Francia. In 1474 he was paid for painting cartoons for two large and two smaller *spalliere* and for various other unspecified designs, which may have included the cartoon from which the Thyssen-Bornemisza and Cleveland *Lamentations* were woven in 1474. In 1479 he made the cartoons for a door curtain to



Fig. 51. *The Lamentation*. Tapestry design attributed to Cosmè Tura, woven in the workshop of Rubinetto di Francia, Ferrara, 1476. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 97.8 x 192.4 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art





Detail of cat. no. 8

be woven by Giovanni Mille and a mule blanket to be woven in several copies. Finally, in 1480 he was paid for a cartoon depicting the *Judgment of Solomon*, which measured 5 by 7 meters.<sup>12</sup>

Although no document has survived to link Tura's name to the Thyssen-Bornemisza and Cleveland *Lamentations*, the style of the design is unmistakably his. As Forti Grazzini and other critics have noted, a close comparison is provided by the *Pietà*, traditionally dated to 1474, which he painted as the lunette for the Roverella Altarpiece. Here the figures are also crowded close to the picture plane with the indication of much greater space behind; there is a similar contrast between the pallor of Christ's flesh and the costumes of the mourners; and the mourners have similar facial char-

acteristics—particularly the leathery eyelids and anguished expressions with half-open mouths. The arid, rocky space of the tapestry is also similar to those in many of Tura's paintings, such as the *Pietà* at the Museo Correr, Venice, which also has the tracery of blood on Christ's pale skin, while the rich brocaded costumes of the mourners correspond to those used by Tura in various compositions such as the *Muse Calliope* (National Gallery, London).<sup>13</sup>

Tura may have found the inspiration for the group of figures around Christ in a Netherlandish model.<sup>14</sup> Leonello d'Este is known to have owned a triptych, now lost, by Rogier van der Weyden, in which the central panel depicted a Deposition or a Lamentation. As Forti Grazzini has pointed out, circumstantial evidence of the

continuing interest in Rogier's work at the Este court is provided by evidence that one of the Este dukes, probably Ercole, acquired a tapestry copy of Rogier's *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*, probably a duplicate of the panel now in the Louvre (fig. 57).<sup>15</sup>

Although there has been some debate in the earlier literature as to the likely dating of the design of this tapestry, recent critics have concurred in agreeing that the *Lamentation* was almost certainly executed in 1474 and that the altar frontal Rubinetto delivered to the Este wardrobe on January 1, 1475, was the first weaving of the design, a dating that would be supported by the youthful appearance of the putative portraits of Ercole and Eleonora.<sup>16</sup>

#### Place of Manufacture

Venturi was the first to suggest that this tapestry was made in Ferrara, on the basis of the apparent link with the documented payment to Rubinetto di Francia on January 1, 1475, and subsequent writers have been almost unanimous in endorsing this identification, which is strongly supported by documented payments to Rubinetto di Francia for a second altar frontal in 1476, which depicted "The Deposition from the Cross, with our Lady, the Marys and Saint John and other figures, with a mountain and two other figures and distant landscapes."<sup>17</sup> As such, the Thyssen-Bornemisza tapestry provides extremely important testimony to the quality of the work that Rubinetto di Francia was capable of producing for his Este patrons.

Rubinetto (Rubino) di Francia is recorded in Ferrarese archives between 1457 and 1484, working under both Borso d'Este and his brother, Duke Ercole I d'Este. Between 1458 and 1470 he wove three sets of bed hangings and in 1469–70 an altar panel for the ducal chapel. Evidently the most skillful of the weavers working in Ferrara, Rubino appears as a salaried staff member of the court from the early 1470s with living quarters in the Castello Nuovo. During the 1470s payments are documented to him for work on various parts of a bed ensemble (1472), the two altar pieces (1475 and 1476), heraldic *spalliere*, and the large tapestry depicting Solomon (1480).<sup>18</sup>

The Thyssen-Bornemisza tapestry is finely woven, with precise rendition of design, an abundance of silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, and rich coloration that is used most



effectively to realize the contrasts that Tura's design required between the rich textures of the costumes and the marmoreal quality of Christ's body. As various critics have observed, the disjunction of style between the foreground figures and the rocky outcrop to the right, all typical of Tura's work, with that of the wooded hills to the left and the foreground plants—which are not in Tura's style—suggests that the latter elements were an invention of the weaver. The process by which these elements came to be incorporated is uncertain. In all likelihood, Tura painted the cartoon with the main elements of the composition, leaving the weaver to complete the left side and bottom of the cartoon with the decorative elements that were typical of the medium (much fifteenth-century Italian production related to millefleurs furnishing tapestries, see pp. 85–101 above).<sup>19</sup>

#### *Related Tapestries*

As noted above, Rubinetto was paid in 1476 for the delivery of an altar panel woven in wool and silk alone, which appears to have been a duplicate of this design. This second panel can be traced in Este records until 1536, when it was consigned to Francesco d'Este, brother of Ercole II, prior to his visit to Charles V.<sup>20</sup> Another weaving of the design, also of wool and silk, is listed in the 1587 and 1636 inventories at Modena, but whether this was the 1476 panel or a later weaving is unknown. A close duplicate of the Thyssen-Bornemisza tapestry, but with some significant differences, survives in the Cleveland Museum of Art collection (fig. 51).<sup>21</sup> Writing in 1982 Forti Grazzini identified this with the wool and silk tapestry delivered by Rubinetto in 1476, but as he subsequently noted, the Cleveland

panel also includes metallic thread.<sup>22</sup> On the basis of the documentary and extant evidence it is clear that there were at least three, and perhaps as many as four, different weavings of this popular design. As the Cleveland tapestry is not recorded in the Este archives, Forti Grazzini has suggested that it may have been commissioned by the duke as a votive offering for a church.<sup>23</sup>

Although the Cleveland tapestry also includes metallic thread and might thus be linked to the earlier payment of 1475, Forti Grazzini and subsequent critics have generally agreed that the Thyssen-Bornemisza example was probably the first weaving of the design because of its superior quality, both in terms of materials and in the care with which the design appears to have been followed.<sup>24</sup> As comparison reveals, there are a number of differences between the Thyssen-Bornemisza and Cleveland tapestries, in the detail of the costumes, the foreground plants, the background landscapes, and the borders.<sup>25</sup> As noted in consideration of the condition, above, the difference of detail between the doors of the sepulcher in the Thyssen-Bornemisza and Cleveland tapestries may reflect the inaccurate reweaving of the former during later conservation. Elsewhere, the differences were evidently introduced by the weaver who reproduced the design. As the overall composition and dimensions of the two panels are consistent, and the variations are largely related to decorative and ornamental details in the landscape, costumes, and foreground, it seems correct to assume that these variations resulted from the weaver responsible for the tapestry and that the weaver of the Cleveland tapestry was a less accomplished craftsman than Rubinetto.

1. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 247.
2. S. J. Campbell 1997, p. 76.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
4. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 247.
5. Venturi 1908, p. 421; Venturi 1909, p. 207.
6. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 52–53; Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 247.
7. Manca 2000, p. 38.
8. Lugli 1990, pp. 325–26, pls. 31–39b; Manca 2000, p. 38.
9. Ortolani 1941, pp. 76–77.
10. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, pp. 247–51; Manca 2000, p. 64.
11. S. J. Campbell 1997, p. 99.
12. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 53; Franceschini 1995, p. 67 no. 701, p. 111 no. 145b, p. 191 no. 270x, p. 234 no. 324a, and docs. 87, 93, 105, 112; Molteni 1999, pp. 129–30.
13. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 52; Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 250.
14. Shepherd 1951, p. 42; Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 250.
15. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 250.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 247; Molteni 1999, p. 129; Manca 2000, p. 132.
17. "[D]eposto dala croce, cum Nostra Dona e le Marie e San Zohanne et altre figure, cum uno monte cum duo altre figurine e tere lontane"; Franceschini 1995, p. 116, no. 150a.
18. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 52–53; Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 247.
19. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 251; Molteni 1999, p. 129; Manca 2000, pp. 38, 64, 103.
20. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 251.
21. *Ibid.*; Manca 2000, pp. 103–4.
22. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 97; Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 251.
23. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 251; Manca 2000, p. 104.
24. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, pp. 247, 250–51; Molteni 1999, p. 128; Manca 2000, pp. 104, 132.
25. Forti Grazzini in Milan 1991, vol. 1, p. 251; Molteni 1999, pp. 128, 134.

## *The Annunciation*

Design attributed to an artist in the circle of Andrea Mantegna, between 1484 and 1519

Woven in Mantua, between 1484 and 1519

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
114.6 x 179 cm (3 ft. 9 1/4 in. x 5 ft. 10 1/4 in.)

9 warps per cm

The Art Institute of Chicago; Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection (1937.1099)

PROVENANCE: Between 1484 and 1519, made for Francesco II Gonzaga; before 1890, Frédéric Spitzer collection; 1893, purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson; 1937, by bequest to the Art Institute of Chicago.

REFERENCES: Müntz 1878–85, pp. 78, 100; Hunter 1914; Göbel 1924, pp. 589–90; Ackerman 1925, pp. 188, 191, 193; Hunter 1925, pp. 213–14; Göbel 1928, pp. 403–5; Ackerman 1933, pp. 200–201; Tietze-Conrat 1955, p. 248; Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 14; Viale Ferrero 1961b, p. 16; Viale Ferrero 1963, pp. 18–22, 50–55; Garavaglia 1967, pp. 84, 124; Mayer Thurman 1969, pp. 29–30; Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 60–61; Viale Ferrero 1982, p. 123; Wardropper 1987, pp. 200–201; Mayer Thurman 1992, pp. 32–33, 144; C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 35, 43.

CONDITION: Tapestry faded and metallic threads tarnished; thus intensity of colors of areas such as the curtain, Gabriel's cloak and wings, and the landscape and garden details is considerably diminished. Surface of tapestry is extensively abraded, with many warp threads exposed and much detail lost in the figures, the foreground, and the background. Couching threads placed by later conservation disturb the visual integrity of original fabric in many areas.

Bearing the arms of Francesco II Gonzaga, fourth marquis of Mantua, as the standard-bearer of the church, a dignity to which he was appointed on September 30, 1510, the design of this tapestry is attributed to an artist working under the influence of Andrea Mantegna. It is one of the very few Italian tapestries to survive from before the 1540s, and it demonstrates the stylistic and technical divergence between Netherlandish and Italian production at the turn of the sixteenth century.

### *Description*

The tapestry depicts one of the most sacred events in the Christian faith, the appearance of the archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to announce that she will bear the Son of God (Luke 1:26–38). The scene takes place in an enclosed garden. Gabriel, who wears an orange

cloak over a white surplice, and whose wings are rendered in a spectacular spectrum of colors, approaches from the left along a path that leads to the prie-dieu at which Mary is kneeling. The variegated effect of the marble floor tiles is rendered in some panels with small dots and stripes against a darker ground, but the lighter tones on the blue diamonds in front of Gabriel are composed of letters that may have a significance as yet unidentified. Behind Gabriel the path is flanked by two large urns planted with carnations (symbolizing Christ's Passion) and a trellis with rosebushes bearing white and red blossoms (symbolizing the Virgin's purity and Christ's Passion, respectively). The angel raises his right hand in the traditional gesture of blessing; he holds a lily (symbol of purity) in his left hand, which is entwined with a ribbon bearing the letters A·G·P·, signifying "Ave, gratia plena" (Hail, thou that art highly favored), the words with which Gabriel is traditionally said to have greeted Mary (Luke 1:28).

The moment of conception is symbolized by the appearance of a dove, the Holy Spirit, in an aurora in the sky above the altar, from which a beam of light descends to Mary's head. Mary, wearing a blue cape, lined with green silk over an orange tunic, kneels at the prie-dieu, reading from a book, presumably the Old Testament, her hands clasped in prayer. Two cushions covered in a sumptuous cloth-of-gold fabric with corner tassels are placed on the seat behind her, while the prie-dieu is made of marble or wood, richly decorated with inlay featuring guilloche and grotesque motifs. The columns of a loggia rise behind the altar, partly screened by a curtain made of the same fabric as the cushions. A swag of leaves and fruit hangs between the columns, with a pendant medallion carrying the inscription: ECCE ANCILLA D[OMINI] F[AT] M[HI] S[ECUNDUM] T[UUM] (Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word), Mary's answer to Gabriel (Luke 1:38). The loggia is partly enclosed by a wall decorated with an inlaid marble pattern of repeated circles, against which a piece of wood furniture is placed. Various implements are visible on this, including a book and an unlit candle (heralding the conception of Christ as "the light of the

world"; John 8:12). The immediate foreground of the scene is populated by a guinea fowl, a richly plumed peacock in the center (symbolic of immortality), and two doves at the right (symbolic of the souls of the blessed). A hillside is visible in the distance crowned by a temple, perhaps an allusion to the Temple of Jerusalem. Two shields bearing the arms of Francesco II Gonzaga appear in the upper field of the sky. The top edges overlap the trompe l'oeil marble frame that surrounds the whole panel.

### *Patron*

The coats of arms depicted in the upper field are those of Francesco II Gonzaga (1466–1519), marquis of Mantua from 1484, as standard-bearer of the church, a dignity that Pope Julius II conferred on him on September 30, 1510. It has been suggested that the arms may be later additions to the tapestry—in which case it is conceivable that the tapestry was made for one of Francesco's forebears before his election as fourth duke of Mantua in 1484—or that the arms may have been adapted after the tapestry was woven—either to adapt them for Francesco after 1484 or to take account of his appointment as standard-bearer of the church in 1510.<sup>1</sup> While the interiors of the armorials have unquestionably been rewoven, the surface of the tapestry is so abraded and restored that it is impossible to determine whether this reweaving is a historic alteration or the result of a later restoration (the back of the tapestry, which may hold the key, cannot be examined at present because many of the restorations have been made through the lining).<sup>2</sup>

As discussed above, the Gonzaga were keen tapestry patrons. Ludovico II Gonzaga (1412–1478), marquis from 1444, purchased tapestries from the Low Countries and also patronized Netherlandish and Italian weavers in Mantua, who produced tapestries from designs by local artists, including Mantegna. The records for Federico I Gonzaga (1441–1484), marquis from 1478, and Francesco II are more limited, but it is clear that Francesco inherited a fine tapestry collection and that he and his wife, Isabella d'Este, continued to augment it during their reign. Although we have no evidence of their





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actively patronizing native workshops, it is probable that a number of tapestry weavers continued to reside in Mantua during the 1490s, and the likelihood that the *Annunciation* tapestry was woven after Francesco's 1484 accession provides circumstantial evidence that at least one of these weavers continued to have some formal connection to the Gonzaga court.

#### *Design and Date*

The stylistic divergence between this panel and contemporary Netherlandish tapestries has widely been recognized since it first came to attention in the Spitzer collection in the late nineteenth century. Müntz assumed that it was Italian and that it dated from the late fifteenth

or early sixteenth century, and it was catalogued as such at the Spitzer sale in 1890.<sup>3</sup> Following identification of the arms as those of the Gonzaga, Hunter tentatively attributed the design to Andrea Mantegna (by 1430–1506), a lead that was followed by Göbel, who, invoking archival documentation demonstrating that Mantegna had supplied tapestry designs to the Gonzaga, suggested that the artist may have provided the design, which was then worked up into a full cartoon by one of his assistants. Göbel stopped short of linking this design to the documented request that Ludovico II Gonzaga made to Mantegna in 1469 for drawings of “due galline de India del naturale, una maschio et una femina” (two guinea fowl from

life, a male and a female), from the specimens in his garden, for “la tapezeria nostra” (our tapestry), because he assumed that this task was for an unrelated verdure tapestry.<sup>4</sup> The suggestion that the tapestry was designed and woven in Mantua was challenged by Ackerman, who first sought to link it to a group of hangings that she attributed to a putative Oudenaarde weaver she identified as Joas Huet, and then, on the basis of comparison with the *Lamentation* (cat. no. 8), to the Ferrarese workshops of the Este, after a design by Cosmè Tura.<sup>5</sup>

Neither of these attributions carries any conviction, and subsequent authors have returned to the assumption that the design was created





Detail of cat. no. 9

by an artist working for the Gonzaga. Tietze-Conrat noted that there was nothing distinctive about the design to support an attribution to Mantegna rather than an artist working under his influence, an opinion that has been followed by most subsequent commentators.<sup>6</sup> While the landscape, marble architecture, and trompe l'oeil marble frame are vaguely Mantegnesque, the simple frontal arrangement of the figures, the schematic nature of the architectural elements, and the poorly rendered perspective do not suggest the direct involvement of the master. The assumption that this work was created by a designer working under his influence therefore seems more appropriate.

What then of the 1469 request to Mantegna to draw a male and a female "galline de India," and the fact that one such bird appears in the foreground of this tapestry? Although the coats of arms of Francesco II suggest that the tapestry was made between 1484 and 1519, it is conceivable that it was woven from a cartoon created about 1470 for Ludovico II or that it was in fact woven at that date and that the arms were a later adaptation.<sup>7</sup> In that case, we might speculate that the design of the tapestry, which is relatively small, could have been created in 1469—in an era when we know that workshops in Mantua were weaving tapestries in silk and metallic thread—by an artist working under Mantegna's influence and that it was

indeed for this commission that Ludovico II requested Mantegna's aid. However, in the absence of any comparative body of Mantuan tapestries, it is impossible to develop this line of argument further. There is no firm evidence that Mantegna's drawings were for this design—they could have been for an unrelated commission—and the generic style of the design provides little evidence to anchor a precise date more specifically within the period 1469 to 1519. The most plausible explanation for the "galline" in this composition is that it was copied by the artist of this design from a previous model, whether Mantegna's drawings or the cartoon or tapestry for which they were created.



The somewhat generic nature of the design, indicating that the tapestry was designed by an artist working under Mantegna's influence, rather than by the master himself, may provide circumstantial evidence for the dating of the *Annunciation* tapestry to the years immediately after Mantegna's death in 1506, although this suggestion must remain a matter of speculation.

Irrespective of the identity of the designer, Viale Ferrero and Forti Grazzini both correctly comment on the very Italianate aesthetic of the design, with a sense of spatial awareness that transforms the decorative wall hanging into a woven painting, in marked contrast to the contemporary trend in Netherlandish tapestry design.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Place of Manufacture*

As noted above, most commentators have assumed an Italian origin for the tapestry on stylistic grounds, and the evidence that Netherlandish and Italian weavers were working for the Gonzaga in Mantua has led to the reasonable assumption that this small piece was probably woven there. Ackerman's attribution to the putative Oudenaarde weaver Joas Huet—based on her reading of the letters in the marble paving slab, and an assumption about the

familiar links between this tapestry and a number of unrelated pieces of Netherlandish origin—is wholly unfounded.<sup>9</sup> The possibility that the design could have been created in Mantua and then sent to the Low Countries for execution can be discounted because the tapestry is technically unlike contemporary Netherlandish products since it incorporates a very high proportion of silk. Netherlandish tapestries tend to reserve the silk for the highlights, using stronger wool for the main areas of the weaving. The present tapestry also reproduces elements such as the flesh and the rich textiles in a way that has no parallel with contemporary Netherlandish practice.

As such, it seems safe to assume that this piece was produced in Italy. Abandoning her attribution to Joas Huet, Ackerman subsequently linked the *Annunciation* tapestry with a group that she assumed had been made at the Ferrarese workshops of the Este.<sup>10</sup> While it is possible that the *Annunciation* could have been woven in Ferrara, the documentary evidence that tapestries were being made for the Gonzaga in Mantua and that at least some of these weavings were of high material quality, which necessitated the purchase of Venetian silk and metallic thread, provides circumstantial

support for an attribution to one of these Mantuan workshops. We know that a Master Maffei was sent to Venice to acquire silk thread for a tapestry that he was weaving from a design by Mantegna in 1465, and it is possible that this piece was woven in that workshop. Equally, it could also have been woven in workshops of any of the other weavers whose names are recorded in the Gonzaga archives or in another workshop, one that is undocumented.

1. Thornton 1991, p. 47.
2. My thanks to Christa Mayer Thurman and Lorna Filipinni for examining the tapestry in respect to this issue on July 5, 2001.
3. Müntz 1878–85, p. 100 and pl. 1; *Spitzer* 1890, p. 159, no. 1.
4. Hunter 1914, pp. 147–48; Göbel 1924, pp. 589–90; Göbel 1928, p. 404. For the document, see Braghirolli 1881, p. 19.
5. Ackerman 1925, p. 193; Ackerman 1933, pp. 200–203.
6. Tietze-Conrat 1955, p. 248; Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 14; Viale Ferrero 1961b, p. 16; Garavaglia 1967, p. 124; Viale Ferrero 1982, p. 123; Wardropper 1987, pp. 200–201; Mayer Thurman 1992, p. 144; Smit 1993b, p. 50; C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 43, n. 1; Adelson in Grove 1996, vol. 20, p. 323.
7. Thornton 1991, p. 47; C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 43, n. 1.
8. Viale Ferrero 1982, p. 123; Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 60.
9. Ackerman 1925.
10. Ackerman 1933, pp. 200, 201.

## IO.

### *The Pentecost*

Design attributed to Lazzaro Bastiani, ca. 1500–1510  
Probably woven in Italy, ca. 1500–1510  
Wool, linen (?), silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
100 x 216 cm (3 ft. 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. x 7 ft. 1 in.)  
7–8 warps per cm  
Patriarcato di Venezia, Ufficio Beni Culturali, proprietà:  
Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute

PROVENANCE: Ca. 1500–1510, probably made as an antependium for the altar of the Virgin at Santo Spirito in Isola, Venice; 1656, requested by Venetian Senate for the new church of Santa Maria della Salute; January 25, 1657, listed as “un palio di razzo di seta” in an inventory of goods that entered the Salute from Santo Spirito; hung on the main altar at the Salute during festivities and otherwise kept in the Great Sacristy of the church.

REFERENCES: Moschini 1819, p. 13; Moschini 1842, p. 2; Urbani de Gheltof 1878, p. 25; Piva 1930, pp. 48 no. 1, 98; Lorenzetti 1961, p. 542; Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 13; Davanzo Poli 1990, p. 40, fig. 2; Lucco 1990, p. 463, pl. 544; A. Augusti in Vicenza 1990; A. Augusti and A. Morassutti in Vicenza 1990; Salerni 1994, p. 24.

CONDITION: May have been cut along the upper side and, in its original form, was probably completed by a border along the four edges. Four tapestry fragments (two attached at each side; not shown) now enlarge the work. Depicting flowers and female personifications (a woman wearing a cuirass, representing Fortitude or Valor, on the left, and Justice at the right), these are evidently portions of lateral borders cut from a tapestry woven in the Netherlands, probably in Brussels, ca. 1560, and unrelated to the central section. This addition was presumably made after the tapestry was moved from its first location to the church of Santa Maria della Salute (built 1631–87), where its measurements had to be adapted to those of the main altar. Washed and restored in 1990.<sup>1</sup>

The horizontal format and religious iconography of this tapestry, which depicts the Pentecost, suggest that it was made as an altar frontal, or antependium; it is still used for this purpose. It was probably woven about 1500–1510 for the altar dedicated to the Virgin at the monastic church of Santo Spirito in Isola, Venice. While the circum-

stances of its commission are not certain, documents indicate that two altars were dedicated at Santo Spirito on Easter Sunday in 1505, one to the Virgin. The tapestry's design has been attributed to the Venetian artist Lazzaro Bastiani based on its stylistic similarities with his known work. It is particularly striking for its centralized, symmetrical composition of figures and architecture and for its representation of perspectival space. While the place of manufacture is unknown, the style of design, color of materials, and character of the weaving suggest that it was woven in Italy. Although documentary evidence suggests that tapestry weaving continued on a small scale in a number of Italian centers at this date, few identifiable pieces have survived. Quite apart from its artistry and iconographic interest, this tapestry is therefore of exceptional importance as one of the rare examples of early sixteenth-century Italian production.

### Description

The tapestry represents an event described in the Acts of the Apostles. According to the biblical account, the apostles were gathered in anticipation of their ministry when “there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3–4). This scene takes place in front of an architectural pavilion backed by a marble wall decorated with classical pilasters. The central pilasters enclose a recessed vaulted area that constitutes a frame for the figure of the Virgin, who sits on a high marble throne in a frontal, iconlike posture, her fingertips lightly touching as she gazes in devotion at the dove of the Holy Spirit, surrounded by winged seraphim, which hovers above her head. The apostles form a circle from the sides of the throne, closed in the foreground by two small, symmetrical kneeling angels. Their faces and gestures express their surprise as they gaze up at the sacred dove.

Iconographically, the design of the tapestry is unusual because it omits the common motif of the flames of the Holy Spirit burning above the heads of the Virgin and the apostles. The pavilion is flanked by low walls, which are shown in steep foreshortening. These terminate in the immediate foreground with two elegant carved marble columns supported by bases ornamented with reliefs of bucrania. A garden extends around the front and sides of the pavilion, full of flowers and animals (a peacock, a lapwing, and a rabbit at left; a tortoise, a dog, and a roebuck at right). The lilies and roses on the left evidently allude to the Virgin. The animals may also have symbolic meaning: for example, the peacocks may refer to immortality, while the roebuck and dog may represent Christians menaced by evil.

The garden is divided from the landscape beyond by a marble wall, a slightly recessed continuation of the back wall of the pavilion, which is pierced by two wide arches. That to the left frames a view evidently inspired by Venice, with two palms, a castle, and other structures along a channel traversed by a foot-bridge. A distant palace with a loggia at ground level may be a stylized rendering of the facade of the Fondaco dei Turchi on Venice’s Grand Canal. The view on the right shows a ship arriv-



ing at a port and other details, including a lion, a monk in a cave, a lioness (?) assaulting a deer, and in the sky, a falcon attacking a heron.

### Artist and Date

As the *Pentecost* is undocumented and unsigned, the provenance and dating of the tapestry must be inferred from internal evidence. Previous scholars have agreed that the style of design suggests that the cartoon was painted in Venice. Older opinions attributing the design to Titian and linking the tapestry with a *paliotto*, or altar panel, that the Venetian ambassador in Florence, Giulio Ghirardo, ordered from the Florentine manufactory in 1597 are entirely spurious.<sup>2</sup> More appropriately, later scholars have recognized the influences of Andrea Mantegna

and Giovanni Bellini that pervade the work. Viale Ferrero suggested a date of about 1510–20, while Davanzo Poli has posited one just before the turn of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In her recent detailed analysis, Augusti notes the composite character of the woven image: the animals and flowers redolent of a medieval style of design; the figures suggestive of Bellini’s influence; the landscapes evoking Bartolomeo Montagna, Lazzaro Bastiani, and Vittore Carpaccio; and the architecture of a High Renaissance classical style. She concluded that this eclectic design could not be assigned to any specific Venetian painter and dated the weaving about 1520–30.<sup>4</sup>

Although it is possible that the appearance of the tapestry may have been elaborated by the





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tapestry weaver by the addition of decorative elements such as the flowers in the garden, the character of the main composition and the figures is more idiosyncratic than Augusti allows. As Lucco proposed, the cartoonist may be identified with Lazzaro Bastiani, a minor but interesting and long-lived Venetian painter, who was documented as a master by 1449 and lived until 1512.<sup>5</sup> Bastiani incorporated in his works most of the elements characteristic of Venetian painting during the second half of the quattrocento. By the later years of his activity, he had absorbed influences from Jacopo Bellini to Cima da Conegliano, from the Paduan style of Francesco Squarcione and Mantegna, to the Venetian style of Antonio and Bartolomeo Vivarini, Gentile Bellini, Antonello da Messina,

Giovanni Bellini, and Carpaccio.<sup>6</sup> As is documented in 1508, he also examined the frescoes by Giorgione and Titian on the exterior walls of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Bastiani reputedly worked as a cartoonist, both in the field of mosaics (for the Basilica of San Marco) and for other mediums: Collobi attributed to him the *modello* for an embroidered antependium with stories of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

The present tapestry is connected in many ways to Bastiani's paintings after 1475–80 with their iconic and geometric character and taste for perspective. These aspects reflect the blend that the painter achieved in his mature works of Byzantine forms with Renaissance concepts of harmony and spatiality. The use of an architectural setting to articulate the composition and

isolate the figures and the religious episodes from the landscape at the sides may be found in his *Nativity* (1480) from the church of Sant'Elena all'Isola; the *Last Communion of Saint Jerome* (ca. 1480); the *Donation of the Relic of the True Cross* (ca. 1480–90) from the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista (all now at the Accademia, Venice); and the *Coronation of the Virgin with Saint Bernard and Saint Ursula* (1490; Pinacoteca, Bergamo).<sup>8</sup> The architectonic and balanced distribution of figures is also characteristic of Bastiani's mature oeuvre, as are the serious and inexpressive faces with small, open eyes and long, straight noses, and the crimped, metallic appearance of the hair and folds of the mantles—typical of painting in Padua—as demonstrated, for example, by the *Glory of Saint*

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Detail of cat. no. 10

*Anthony and Christ and the Cananaean Woman* (both Accademia, Venice).<sup>9</sup> The rigid frontality of the Virgin in the antependium, her arms expanded by the rolled sleeves of her mantle, may be compared with the central panel of Bastiani's triptych of about 1485 in the Howorth collection.<sup>10</sup> The animals and pastoral elements of the landscapes also have parallels in Bastiani's paintings, as for example in his *Nativity* (Accademia, Venice) and the *Blessing Christ* (Galleria Estense, Modena).<sup>11</sup>

In attributing the *Pentecost* design to Bastiani, Lucco proposed a date of about 1490–1500. However, we know that Bastiani was still active as a painter in the first years of the sixteenth

century and that he executed three standards for the Basilica of San Marco in 1505. Since the altar of the Virgin in Santo Spirito in Isola, probably the first destination of the antependium, was consecrated in 1505, an analogous dating for the lost cartoon and for its weaving may therefore be appropriate.

#### *Place of Manufacture*

Some figurative details, possibly inserted by the weaver, reveal a Netherlandish taste, so the cartoon may have been sent to the Netherlands to be copied in the tapestry medium. Equally, the divergence of the colors and the style of weaving from those of contemporary Netherlandish

tapestries suggest that it is more likely that the tapestry was made in Venice, possibly by a Netherlandish émigré. The old but still fundamental study by Urbani de Gheltof shows that throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries various Northern weavers settled and worked in Venice, making tapestries after Venetian designs.<sup>12</sup> Though the names of tapestry weavers working in Venice about 1505 are not recorded and no tapestry is definitely known to have been executed in the Serenissima at that time, the existence of a Venetian production is likely, as seen in an earlier set of the *Passion* made for the Basilica of San Marco (see cat. no. 7).









Detail of cat. no. 10

The *Pentecost*, one of the earliest surviving tapestries after an Italian model, reveals a classic, architectonic, and spatial character that also appears in the set of the *Months* executed in Vigevano (Lombardy) after cartoons by Bramantino about 1504–9 (see cat. no. 11). A similar spatiality, but without the classicism, can be found in the antependium with the *Virgin, Angels, and Four Crowned Saints* (Fondazione Cagnola, Gazzada, Varese) woven in the Netherlands for Milan Cathedral in 1502 after a Netherlandish cartoon but probably based on a sketch sent from Italy.<sup>13</sup>

#### Patron

The tapestry was probably made for the monastic church of Santo Spirito in Isola in Venice, which no longer exists. According to the text of an inscribed marble tablet that was still in the church in the eighteenth century, Santo Spirito in Isola and its two main altars dedicated to the True Cross and to the Virgin were consecrated by Bernardo Venier, bishop of Chioggia, on Easter Sunday 1505.<sup>14</sup> The present tapestry, showing Mary beneath the dove of the Holy

Spirit in the scene of the Pentecost, would have been conceived as an antependium for the altar of the Virgin. Therefore the date 1505 may offer an important reference for the design and production of the woven hanging.

Beginning in 1540, the facade and choir of Santo Spirito in Isola were partially rebuilt after designs by Jacopo Sansovino. In 1656, the order of Augustinian canons in residence at Santo Spirito was suppressed, resulting in the removal of the tapestry and many other important works of art that decorated the church and the monastery. The Venetian Senate, with the approval of Pope Innocent X, requested the works for the new “civic temple” of Santa Maria della Salute, which was still under construction. Between 1657 and 1659, a number of works were taken from Santo Spirito to the Salute. These included the altarpiece of *Saint Mark and Other Saints* by Titian, the first altarpiece painted by him, made for Santo Spirito about 1510;<sup>15</sup> an altarpiece of the Pentecost, ceiling paintings with Old Testament scenes, and roundels with the Evangelists and church fathers, also by Titian; organ shutters, ceiling

paintings depicting Old Testament scenes, and a *Last Supper* by Salviati; and silver candlesticks by Andrea di Alessandro Bresciano. The present tapestry was among these works; it was listed as “un palio di razzo di seta” (a tapestry altar-cloth of silk) in an inventory of objects that arrived at the Salute from Santo Spirito on January 25, 1657.<sup>16</sup>

NELLO FORTI GRAZZINI

1. A. Augusti and A. Morassutti in Vicenza 1990; former restorations were maintained (rewoven areas and tapestry patches along the lower edge), and some new areas rewoven, especially on the red garments of the Virgin and of the apostles where the original weft threads had largely disintegrated.
2. Moschini 1819; Moschini 1842; Urbani de Gheltof 1878, p. 25, with reference to an event reported by Conti in 1875 (p. 60). On the tapestry commissioned by Giulio Ghirardo, the so-called *Paliotto Grimani*, which is still in Venice in the Museo della Basilica di San Marco, see Meoni 1998, pp. 103–4, and Davanzo Poli in Dolcini, Davanzo Poli, and Vio 1999, pp. 153–63, 206–7.
3. Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 13; Davanzo Poli 1990, p. 40.
4. A. Augusti in Vicenza 1990, p. 44.
5. Lucco 1990, p. 463.
6. For a useful overview of Bastiani's life and work, see Arslan 1965 and Humfrey 1990. For a recent reevaluation of his career, see L. Sartor 1997.
7. Collobi 1939, p. 37, fig. 8 (at that time the antependium was in the Varenus collection, Stockholm).
8. Ibid., figs. 32, 27; on the *Donation*, see P. F. Brown 1988, pp. 135–64, 282–86; and for the *Coronation*, see L. Sartor 1997, fig. 12.
9. Collobi 1939, figs. 16, 34.
10. Ibid., fig. 45.
11. For the animals, see the peacock and the lapwing in the *Angel of the Annunciation* (ca. 1485; Museo Civico, Padua); Collobi 1939, fig. 47. For pastoral elements, see ibid., figs. 39–41.
12. Urbani de Gheltof 1878, pp. 14–29.
13. Forti Grazzini 1999a, pp. 25–27, no. 1, pls. 1a–d.
14. Cornaro 1758, pp. 496–97.
15. A. Augusti in Venice and Washington 1990, pp. 151–52, no. 5.
16. Archivio di Stato, Venice, Santa Maria della Salute, busta 55, “1656 [Venetian dating: 1657] a di 25 Ginnario, Inventario delle argenterie e suppellettili sacre, erano dilla chiesa di S. Spirito, consignati alli P.P. Somaschi in esecut. e dilla parte dell'Ecc.mo Senato di 29 dil passato per servitio dilla chiesa dilla Maria dilla Salute,” containing the “Inventario di paramenti dilla Sacristia dilla sudeta Chiesa di S. Spirito tutti usati et consegnati come sopra,” which includes the present tapestry; published by Piva 1930, pp. 47–51, no. 1.



## II.

### *December*

From a twelve-piece set of the *Months* (also known as the Trivulzio *Months*)

Design by Bramantino, 1501–4

Woven in the workshop of Benedetto da Milano,

Vigevano, between 1503 and 1509

Wool and silk

447 x 503 cm (14 ft. 8 in. x 16 ft. 6 in.)

5–6 warps per cm

Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan (39)

**PROVENANCE:** Between 1503 and 1509, made for Gian Giacomo Trivulzio; 1521, lent by Gian Francesco Trivulzio (nephew of Gian Giacomo) to his cousin; 1535, listed in inventory of objects that Gian Francesco received from his guardian Anna d'Avalos; by descent in the Trivulzio family; probably conserved in the mid-19th century; 1871, exhibited to the public for the first time at the Salone dei Giardini Pubblici; 1935, exhibited with other objects from the Trivulzio collection at the Musei di Castello and subsequently purchased from Prince Luigi Alberico Trivulzio on behalf of the museum; World War II, evacuated to Sondalo (Sondrio); 1956, returned to the Castello; 1957, conserved in Florence; 1998, conserved in Milan.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Suida 1943; M. Viale in Turin 1952, pp. 70–71; Suida 1953, pp. 73–81; Valsecchi 1968; Mulazzani in Dell'Acqua and Mulazzani 1978, pp. 88–92; Forti Grazzini 1982a; Forti Grazzini 1984 (with bibliog.); Pertegato 1993.

**CONDITION:** Tapestry is faded, especially in lighter spectrum of colors and skin tones. Extensive reweaving in architectural areas, particularly in the vaulting of the two right-hand arches, the doorway immediately behind the man with an ax in the right foreground, the facing of the pillars supporting the distant arches, and the left-hand tower of the castle visible in the distance. Overall tonal balance and pictorial integrity are relatively well preserved.<sup>2</sup>

A virtuoso exercise in design and a veritable compendium of Italian Renaissance thought and iconography, the Trivulzio *Months* is the earliest surviving set of tapestries in which the key elements of Italian aesthetics—temporal and spatial unity—have been applied to a full-scale tapestry series (as opposed to smaller picture-size panels). Woven for Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, a marshal of France, marquis of Vigevano, and governor general of Lombardy, between about 1503 and 1509, from designs by Bramantino, one of the leading artists in Milan

at this time, in the workshop of Benedetto da Milano established for this purpose in Vigevano, the set synthesizes a broad spectrum of antique and modern sources in a scheme that appears to have been intended as a celebration of the peace and prosperity that Trivulzio's leadership brought to Milan (Trivulzio captured Milan for the French in 1499).

#### *Description*

Although the theme of the months and seasons is known to have been the subject of a number of tapestry series in the fifteenth century, this is the earliest extant example in which a separate tapestry was devoted to each month. Each panel conforms to a uniform tripartite structure, in which the lower register is occupied by peasants engaged with a task or festivity traditionally associated with that month. This activity takes place around a central personification of that month, who is generally raised above their heads on a pedestal. The upper register of each tapestry is occupied to the left and right by two coronas representing the sun and the appropriate zodiacal sign for the month and, in the center, a cartouche displaying the arms, *impresa*, and motto of the patron.

The *December* panel represents one of the most commonly illustrated themes associated with the month in late medieval and Renaissance illustrated calendars, the slaughter of swine. The scene takes place in a large, stone-vaulted room. Instead of the literal act of slaughter that normally occupies the focal point of such scenes, the center of the tapestry is dominated by a large copper cauldron over a fire. The impending deed is suggested by the figures standing in the immediate foreground: at the right, a man with an ax next to two pigs that are presumably enjoying their last meal and, at the left, a man inflating a pig's bladder to serve as a balloon for a small child. A peasant on his knees tends the central cauldron, while the contents are being stirred by a woman whose train of thought is suggested by the string of sausages she is regarding, somewhat dreamily, as a young man embraces her from behind. Behind this couple a group of peasants is bringing offerings

to the personification of the month, who stands on a plinth in the center of the room in front of the pillar that supports the stone vaults.

December appears as an old bearded man, whose feet are tied by a rope, a sickle in his hands. This is a representation of the god Saturn, inspired by a passage in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius (fl. ca. 430), first published in Venice in 1472, of which a copy is documented in the library of Renato Trivulzio, Gian Giacomo's brother.<sup>3</sup> According to Macrobius, the rope tying the god's feet alludes to temporal continuity. The view through the arches at the back of the room is dominated by a large fortress, in a wintry landscape of bare trees and snow-covered mountains. Below, a plaque carries the inscription: GAVDERE PARTO / CVM GREGE / CASA FRVI / AVCVPE / ET SVES / SALIRE / PROLIS INGERIT / DECEMBER OPERAM INVERTIBVS (December makes one take pleasure, in the house, in the newborn sheep and the young hen birds. One salts the pork, and it [December] makes even the youngsters lazy).

The top third of the tapestry follows the composition and format of the rest of the set. The right side features a corona with the symbol of Capricorn, the appropriate zodiacal sign of the month, which is derived from a print that appeared with the *Astronomicum* of Igino, first published in Venice in 1482.<sup>4</sup> The corona in the upper left corner encircles a representation of the sun, the width and opacity of the corona contrasting with the diminishing coronas of the spring and summer months, in accordance with the astrological belief of the time.<sup>5</sup> The central cartouche is outlined by a thin tracery border, in contrast to those for the more clement months, which are framed by vines (March), ribbons (April), or swags of leaves. It features the coat of arms of Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (bars of gold and green), his *impresa*—a siren breaking a file on a diamond—his motto, NETES MAI (probably an abbreviation for “non temere,” or “non ti smarrire”: he has no fear, or he does not stray), and the inscription IO IA.TRIVS.MAR.VIGLI.FRANCIE.MARES (Gian Giacomo Trivulzio marchese di Vigevano maresciallo di Francia—the title with which Trivulzio was rewarded by Louis XII in September 1499).<sup>6</sup>

The border of the tapestry is also consistent with those of the other pieces in the set, comprising a tracery pattern that acts as a frame to a repeating sequence of five coats of arms. In the corners and center of each side are those of the patron himself (bands of green and gold, flanked by the initials IO and IA for Joannes Jacobus). These alternate with four other arms; those of his son Gian Nicolò (a white cross of Saint Andrea on a red ground and the initials IO and NI for Joannes Nicolaus); those of the Colleoni family of Bergamo (with the initials MAR and RG for Margherita, first wife of Gian Giacomo, who died in 1485); those of the Avalos family (quartered arms with castles and lions and initials BE and ATR for Beatrice, whom Gian Giacomo married in 1487); and those of the family of Gonzaga di Castiglione (quartered arms with eagles and the initials PA and ULA for Paola, who married Gian Nicolò in 1501).<sup>7</sup> The border thus provides a celebration of the dynastic fortunes of the Trivulzio family.

#### Iconography

This is the earliest known tapestry series in which each month is treated as a separate scene and the first tapestry series in which the emphasis of each scene involved the representation of quotidian activity rather than the gods and symbols associated with that month.<sup>8</sup> The iconographic sources were first examined in detail by Valsecchi, who related the scheme of this set to late antique and medieval models. Of these, the closest to the Trivulzio *Months* are the frescoes in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, which recall the compositional formula of the so-called *Calendario dei figli di Costantino*, probably derived from an antique model, in which the activities of the humans seen in the lower registers of the fresco reflected the power of the deities whose influence was believed to determine sublunar activity in that month. But as Mulazzani also demonstrated, many of the pastoral scenes are closely related to motifs that were common in Lombard tradition, particularly that of manuscript illumination, as evidenced by extant manuscripts of the *Tacuini sanitatis* (for example, Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, MS ser. nova 2644) and the *Libro d'Ore Borromeo* (1471–74; Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, MS s.p. 42).<sup>9</sup>

Since its earliest public display, critics have noted the distinctive way in which the Trivulzio

*Months* panels combine scenes of earthy realism with esoteric references to classical models and iconography, but they have placed varying emphases on the realism and idealization of the scenes. Valsecchi interpreted the scenes as a celebration of serfdom and manual labor, whereas Mulazzani related the set to the early-sixteenth-century vogue in Lombardy for images of pastoral activity that accompanied the relatively stable political and economic situation the region enjoyed during the years of French rule.<sup>10</sup> The most profound reading has been provided by Forti Grazzini, who placed the set in the context of what we know of Trivulzio's character and status. Forti Grazzini suggested that the series is a symbolic celebration of Trivulzio's political role, as the creator and protector of the peace in Lombardy, worked out in a complicated conceit that was informed both by Trivulzio's love of classical literature and by his interest in astrology (as documented by the 1507 dedication to Gabriello Pirovano's *Defensio astronomiae*, which acclaims him as a fervent follower of astrology). Indeed, it must have been this interest that suggested the conceit of the tapestries. According to Forti Grazzini's analysis, each scene represents an idealized vision of peasant activity, in part based on contemporary reality but frequently resonant with symbolism and associations derived from classical sources, first and foremost the *Georgics* of Virgil. These contemporary scenes and classical resonances join to evoke a new golden age under the combined influence of the sun and the planets, as represented by the coronas in the upper fields of the tapestry, and, equally, Trivulzio's influence, as represented by the central cartouche in the center of the upper register. After all, it was through Trivulzio's support for the French that peace and prosperity had returned to Lombardy after the 1499–1500 war.<sup>11</sup> As Forti Grazzini demonstrates, while many of the subjects of the monthly activities were inspired by local Lombard models, the choice seems equally to have been determined by the possibility that such scenes could be used to invoke classical models. Such is the case with *December*, where the slaughtering of pigs provided Bramantino with a basis for introducing the atmosphere of the carnival and, in this way, evoking Saturnalia, the festival of Saturn celebrated in ancient Roman times during December.

#### Conception and Composition

The tapestry design of the Trivulzio *Months* was innovatory in the devotion of a single tapestry to each month; in the blending of realistic representation with classical sources; and in a number of compositional respects. Most important, it was the first large-scale series (that we know of, at any rate) conceived as an all-enveloping scheme, en suite. As Forti Grazzini has commented, Bramantino evidently took great pains to ensure the unified conception of the series, structurally, coloristically, and iconographically, creating a grand illusionistic scheme in which each scene places the viewer on the same level as the peasants, below the personification of the month, who in turn stands immediately below the Trivulzio arms.<sup>12</sup> As such, the Trivulzio *Months* provided an extraordinary break with the traditional compositional conventions and traditions of tapestry design, anticipating the innovations of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* by at least a decade. Although we know too little about what has been lost (for example, Mantegna's acclaimed tapestries woven for the Gonzaga), it is probably safe to say that this was the most ambitious application of these signature concerns of contemporary Italian aesthetics to the tapestry medium. Indeed, it must have been one of the most ambitious applications of these principles in any figurative medium at that date.

The location for which the set was intended is unknown—it may have been created for the castle in Vigevano and then transferred to the Palazzo Trivulzio on the Via Rugabella in Milan. The set appears to have been conceived with a counterclockwise structure. This is suggested by the direction in which the deities point and by the way the scene depicted at the left of the month of January continues into the right of the month of February (fig. 52).<sup>13</sup>

#### Patron

Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (1441–1518) belonged to a prominent landowning family in Milan, where he was a favorite of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza. A condottiere by profession, Trivulzio received generous remuneration for his service to the Sforza before entering that of Ferdinand I, king of Naples, in 1486. In 1498 he transferred his allegiance to Charles VIII, king of France, and in 1499 he captured the duchy of Milan for Louis XII, for which he was created a marshal







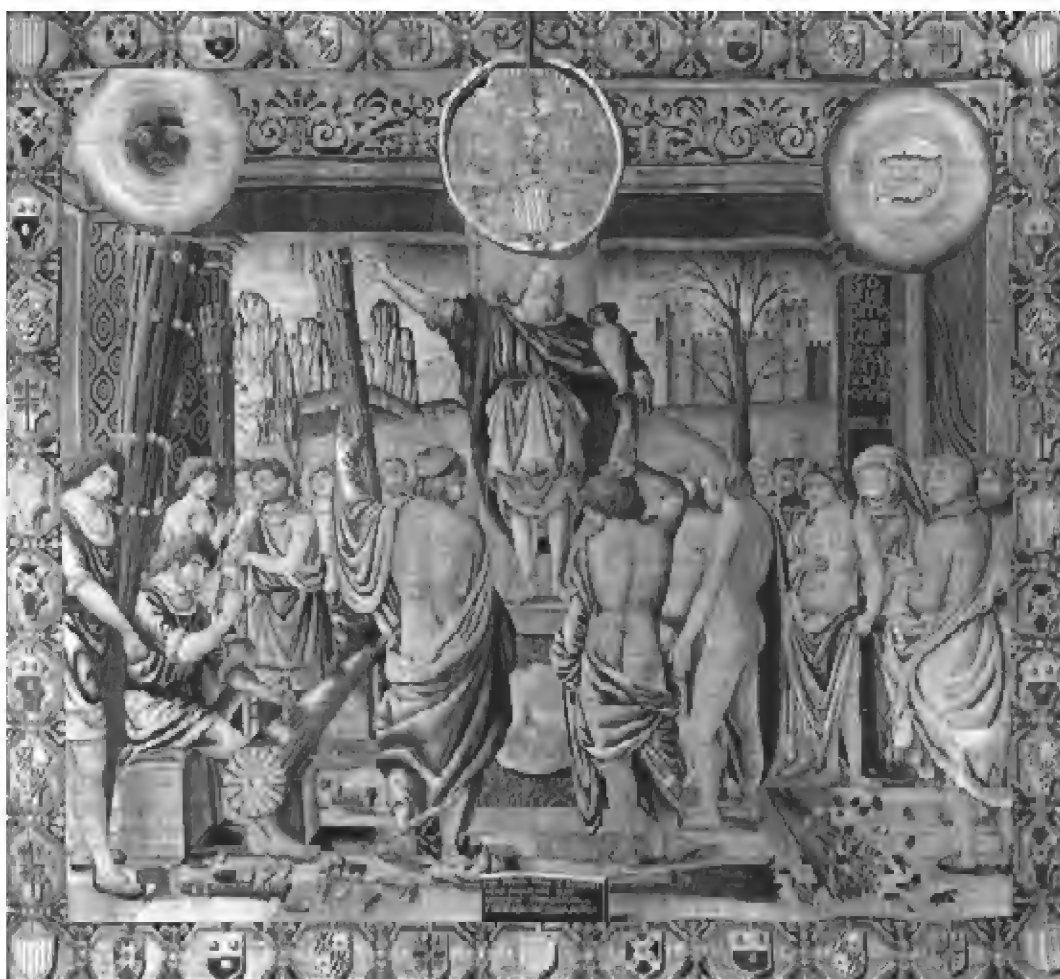


Fig. 52. *February* from the *Months* (Trivulzio Months). Tapestry designed by Bramantino, woven in the workshop of Benedetto da Milano, Vigevano, between 1503 and 1509. Wool and silk, 447 x 503 cm. Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan

of France, marquis of Vigevano, and governor general of Lombardy (December 18, 1499). In the years following the 1499–1500 war Trivulzio became a notable patron of the arts and letters of Milan. From 1469 he had constructed a sizable palace in Milan (destroyed), which was extensively altered and redecorated after 1500. His interest in antiquity was reflected in the ancient inscriptions with which the palace was decorated, and he also collected manuscripts of classical texts. Too partisan for the French interests to retain the governorship of Lombardy for long in the polarized political climate of Milan, Trivulzio was replaced by Charles II d'Amboise, count of Chaumont, which released him to channel his energies into his own affairs and artistic patronage during the relative stability that Milan enjoyed under French rule between 1500 and 1512.

Trivulzio was an important patron of writers and humanists in Milan, commissioning translations of the classics, largely with the motivation

of using the arts as a way of projecting and celebrating his status and achievements.<sup>14</sup> In the years following his replacement by Charles d'Amboise he commissioned the two most ambitious artistic enterprises of his career, the *Months* tapestries and a suitable sepulchral monument to himself. Leonardo da Vinci, resident in Milan part of the time between 1506 and 1513, provided drawings and an estimate for an elaborate tomb (ca. 1510), but eventually the commission was placed with Bramantino, who designed a funerary chapel, built at the front of San Nazaro, which combined traditional Milanese elements with ideas derived from the antique.<sup>15</sup>

#### Designer

The design of the tapestries was attributed to Bramantino when the tapestries were first publicly exhibited in 1871, and subsequent monographs on Bramantino and detailed studies of the tapestries have reiterated the close stylistic

links between the tapestries and Bramantino's paintings and drawings of this period, such as the *Adoration of the Magi* (ca. 1500; National Gallery, London); the attribution has been universally accepted in all recent studies.<sup>16</sup> Opinion regarding Bramantino's role in the execution of the cartoons as well as the *modelli* has varied. Nicodemi suggested that the designs of the *modelli* alone should be attributed to Bramantino and that the inconsistencies of proportion and perspective apparent in certain areas of the tapestries probably derived from the fact that the cartoons were executed by another artist, an opinion that was repeated by M. Viale when examples of the set were exhibited in Turin.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, Viale Ferrero suggested that the infelicities of interpretation might have resulted from the technical limitations of this pioneering workshop, an explanation accepted by Forti Grazzini, the most knowledgeable student of this set.<sup>18</sup>

Along with Leonardo da Vinci, Bartolomeo Suardi (ca. 1465–1530), known as il Bramantino, was one of the leading artists in Milan in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. His early work combined the influences of Donato Bramante (linear emphasis and dramatic treatment of light, interest in perspective and illusionism) with that of Mantegna. An innovative approach to both choice of subject matter and form is already evident in early works like the *Adoration of the Magi* and was given free rein in the *Months* tapestry commission. Bramantino spent much of 1508 working in the papal apartments at the Vatican for Julius II, returning in 1509 to Milan, where his reputation brought many commissions, including that for Trivulzio's funerary chapel in 1512. Bramantino's interest in antique forms inspired the octagonal plan, projecting portico, and crypts. In 1519 he was involved in a committee advising on the reconstruction of Milan Cathedral, and in 1525 he was appointed official architect and painter by Francesco Maria Sforza. But his fortunes fell with those of his patron, and Bramantino was banished from Milan in 1525 because of his allegiance to the Sforza.<sup>19</sup>

#### Workshop

The *February* tapestry carries an inscription, EGO BENEDITVS DE MEDIOLANI HOC OPVS FECIT CON SOCIIS SVIS IN VIGLEVANI (I, Benedict of Milan made this work with my associates in Vigevano).





CVM GREGE  
VPE/ET SVES  
NGERIT

DA M INERTIDVZ







Further information about this weaver and his associates—Lorenzo de' Cavalieri, Antonio da Po and his brothers, and Francesco Ferraro and Giacomo da Cremona—was provided by a book of payments relating to Trivulzio affairs for 1509 that was discovered by Suida in 1943 (destroyed in the same year), which included references to the weaving of two of the tapestries (*November* and *January*) between February and September 1509, including candles to work at night.<sup>20</sup> Subsequent payments record work on a “lettiera da campo” from designs by Cristoforo da Volpe, worked with gold and silver (1509–10), and an *antiporta* (1510–11), but as no more payments for the *Months* appear, we can assume that the set had been completed by December 21, 1509, when a note states that the two pieces were finished.<sup>21</sup>

Nothing is known about Benedetto da Milano, although we can surmise that he may have trained under French or Netherlandish weavers in one of the workshops in Milan, Ferrara, or elsewhere. The technical weaknesses of execution and interpretation of the cartoons certainly suggest that the workshop of Benedetto da Milano was a provincial one. Nothing else is known of this shop, but it was probably in Trivulzio's palace in Vigevano. This workshop probably closed soon after Trivulzio's departure for France in 1512.

#### Date

The date 1503 is included in the design of the month of October, which suggests that the cartoon for this piece may have been prepared in that year. On the basis of evidence that the last two pieces were woven in the course of 1509, and the assumption that the previous pieces were also woven at the rate of two every nine to twelve months, we can therefore postulate that the weaving commenced sometime in 1503 to 1504.

The date at which the cartoons were prepared is unknown. A terminus post quem of 1501 is provided by the inclusion in the border of the arms of Paola Gonzaga, who married Gian Nicolò, son of Gian Giacomo, in that year, and we can assume that the *modelli* were executed sometime between then and 1504. The stylistic variation between the panels has led to various theories regarding the order in which the cartoons were created, most of which were exploded by Suida's discovery that the *February* (fig. 52) and *November* panels were the last woven. Nonetheless, the divergence between the style of *March* and that of other panels may well indicate that the creation of the cartoons extended over a period of some years, with a date of completion at some point before Bramantino's departure for Rome in 1508.

1. C. Alberici in Forti Grazzini 1982a, pp. 7–10; Forti Grazzini 1984, p. 50; Pertegato 1993, p. 217.
2. Pertegato 1993.
3. Forti Grazzini 1984, p. 62.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Suida 1953, pp. 74–75.
8. Forti Grazzini 1984, p. 52.
9. For full references to previous discussions, see *ibid.*, p. 51.
10. Valsecchi 1968, p. 39; Mulazzani in Dell'Acqua and Mulazzani 1978, pp. 39–40.
11. Forti Grazzini 1982a; Forti Grazzini 1984, pp. 50–65.
12. Forti Grazzini 1984, pp. 53–54.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
14. Forti Grazzini 1982a, pp. 13–20.
15. Charles Robertson in Grove 1996, vol. 31, p. 352.
16. Suida 1953; Valsecchi 1968; Forti Grazzini 1982a; Forti Grazzini 1984, pp. 50–51, 55.
17. Nicodemi 1935, pp. 11–35; M. Viale in Turin 1952, p. 71.
18. Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 19; Viale Ferrero 1961b, pp. 16–17; Forti Grazzini 1982a; Forti Grazzini 1984, p. 54.
19. Charles Robertson in Grove 1996, vol. 4, p. 654.
20. Suida 1943, pp. 28–36; Suida 1953, pp. 158–60; Valsecchi 1968, pp. 31, 78.
21. Forti Grazzini 1984, p. 50.







# Netherlandish Production and the Rise of Brussels, 1480-1515

By the last quarter of the fifteenth century, a sizable tapestry industry had existed in the Netherlands for more than a century. Although the main centers had changed during this period, the determining factors that were to ensure the continuing vitality of production were all in place: the concentration of a large number of workshops in the main urban centers under the jurisdiction of local guilds that ensured a certain standard of quality; the availability of a large workforce of skilled weavers; reliable sources for the supply and dyeing of raw materials; the presence of local artists who were experienced in the production of tapestry cartoons; and, most important of all, a network of relationships among patrons, merchants, and workshops that could guarantee the continuity of funding on which large volume and high-quality production depended. While the finest products generally resulted from commissions, many more medium- and lower-quality products were being made on a speculative basis for sale at the annual fairs in centers such as Bergen op Zoom, Bruges, and Antwerp. From there, tapestries were dispersed all over Europe to a sophisticated clientele for whom tapestry was now a well-established demonstration of wealth and magnificence.

The fact that the Burgundian dukes had been primarily resident in Lille during the 1450s and then Brussels from the 1460s had encouraged the development of high-end production in these towns during these years. This process evidently continued in Brussels during the following decades despite—or perhaps because of—the turbulent political circumstances of the time. Following the death of Duke Charles the Bold at Nancy in 1477, Charles VIII attempted to annex the Burgundian territories, and both Arras and Tournai were occupied by French troops, with dreadful consequences for the local economies, particularly that of Arras. Charles the Bold's heir, his twenty-year-old daughter Mary, forced to bargain with the provinces and towns of the Netherlands in order to gain their loyalty, yielded back to them all the local and communal rights they had lost under her predecessors. With her marriage that year to Maximilian of Austria, afterward Emperor Maximilian I, the political situation calmed down somewhat, but

this pact, known as the Great Privilege, laid an unstable foundation for relations between the Habsburg rulers and their Burgundian subjects during the following decades. After Mary's premature death in 1482, the Netherlands came under the guardianship of Maximilian, during the minority of their eldest son, Philip (the Handsome; b. 1478). During these years Brussels remained the administrative capital of the Netherlands, providing a continuity and prosperity that were enhanced by the concessions the town patricians and guilds had wrested from Mary through the Great Privilege. These circumstances encouraged the Brussels tapestry industry to expand and prosper, while the situation of its leading rivals was compromised by the brutal realities of the times. Indeed, it appears to have been during the last quarter of the fifteenth century that Brussels became the center of high-quality Netherlandish production, to the extent that in his *Relazione di Borgogna* (1506), Venetian ambassador Vincenzo Quirini wrote: "In this country three things are excellent: the many fine and beautiful linens in Holland; the beautiful figured tapestries of Brabant; the third is the music, which one could say is perfect."<sup>1</sup>

If the continuing presence of the court in Brussels contributed to the expansion of the local industry from the 1490s, another factor must have been the emergence of charismatic and entrepreneurial merchants commissioning new cartoons and acting as intermediaries between the patrons and workshops. Few of these merchants are documented in any detail, but one figure stands out in sharp relief, Pieter van Edingen (Enghien), called Pieter van Aelst (ca. 1450–1533).<sup>2</sup> Born at Waterloo, near Aalst, about 1450, van Aelst became a freeman of Brussels in 1493, a distinction that would have given him the right to sell tapestries in the town. Perhaps benefiting from Pasquier Grenier's recent death, and certainly from the majority of Philip the Handsome in 1494, he subsequently developed a relationship with Philip and his wife, Joanna of Castile, much like the one Grenier had enjoyed with Philip's grandfather Philip the Good. The earliest documentation of his activity is provided by a 1497 sale to Philip the Handsome of two chambers of verdure, one with shepherds and shepherdesses, the

other with woodcutters (the latter perhaps akin to pieces of this subject now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London).<sup>3</sup> Shortly afterward, van Aelst appears in relation to the English court of Henry VII. From 1498 to 1502 substantial loans and payments to van Aelst are recorded for a series of commissions that appear to have been stimulated by construction of Richmond, the sumptuous palace that was to replace Sheen, which had burned down at Christmas 1497. At this time van Aelst was working in partnership with the rich Florentine merchants Ludovico de la Fava and Lorenzo Barduce (a relationship which anticipated the commercial alliances that van Aelst subsequently established with the Gualteroti and the Fuggers to guarantee the more ambitious projects of which he was the impresario during the 1520s). The subjects for which these large payments were disbursed are, with one exception, undocumented. The exception, an ensemble supplied early in 1502, was described as “oon pece of arras of tholde lawe and newe and nyne bordoures of the same wrought with fyne golde broughte from the parties of beyonde the see by Peter Enghem arras maker of Bruxelles.” The subject suggests that this may have been a throne canopy woven from the same cartoon as the so-

called *Glorification of Christ* now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, which incorporates symbols of the Old and New Laws and is stylistically and technically related to tapestries that van Aelst supplied to the Burgundian court in the same year.<sup>4</sup>

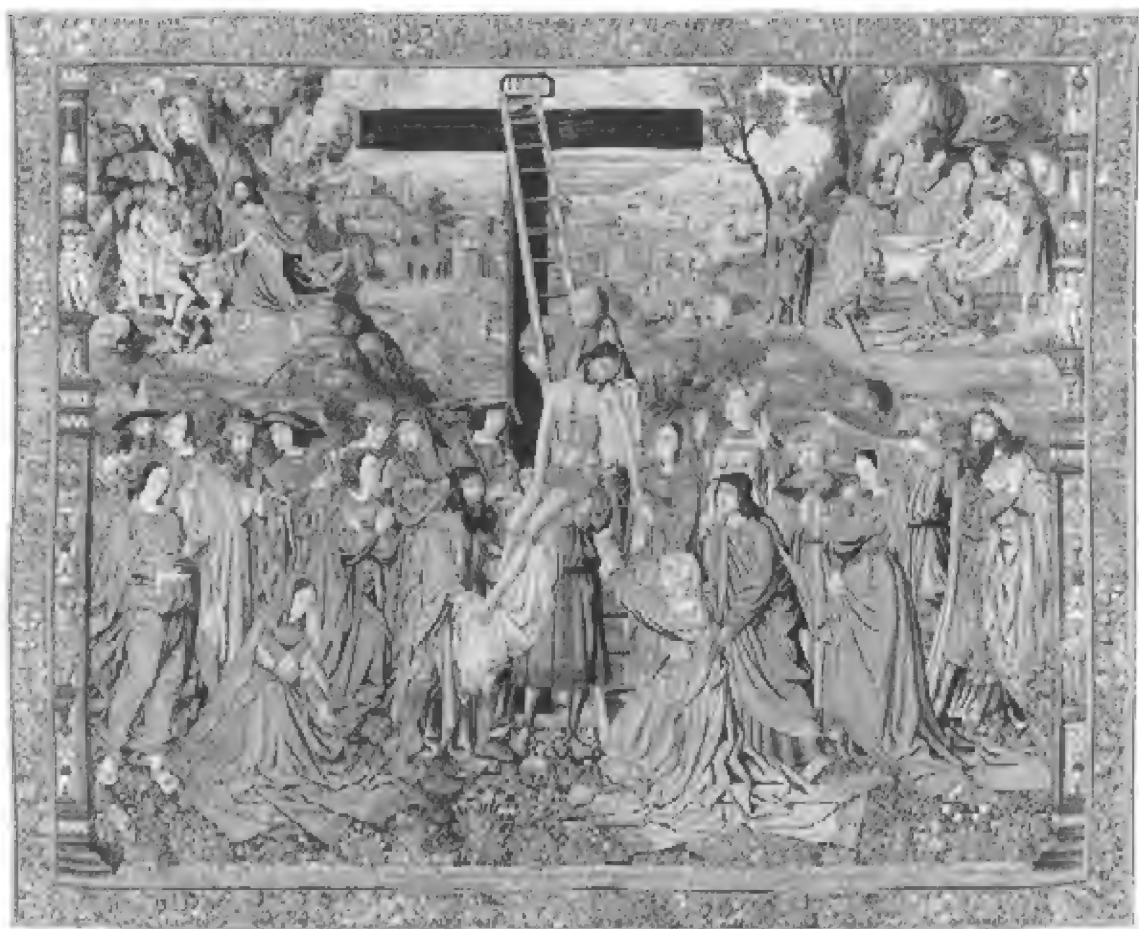
In July 1502 van Aelst was appointed “valet de chambre et tapissier du roy” to Philip the Handsome. Although Philip continued to patronize workshops elsewhere in his domains, it is clear that the finest tapestries he acquired in the following years were obtained through van Aelst. Between 1502 and 1506 van Aelst would supply a number of exquisite tapestries to Philip and Joanna of Castile, such as the four-piece set the *Veneration of the Virgin*, also known as the *paños de oro* (golden hangings; see fig. 54), and the *Mass of Saint Gregory* (cat. no. 12), which display a new level of technical and stylistic perfection in tapestry production.<sup>5</sup> The latter carries the inscription BRUXEL on the fringe of Gregory’s cope. Van Aelst traveled to Spain with Philip in both 1502 and 1506, selling him several sets of tapestry before the 1506 trip and subsequently lending him 22,000 guilders. When Philip died on September 25, 1506, van Aelst was instrumental in resolving the dispute that developed between Philip’s Spanish and Netherlandish



Fig. 54. *The Birth of Christ* from the *Veneration of the Virgin* (the *paños de oro*). Tapestry woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1500–1502. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 305 x 335 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Fig. 55. *The Deposition from the Passion*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1507. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 305 x 367 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



courtiers for the control of his movable possessions, a task that took him two years, including a spell in prison because of his loyalty to the Burgundian faction, and involved his advancing 3,285 pounds to various parties, which he was repaid in 1509.<sup>6</sup> The size of the sums involved demonstrates that, like Nicolas Bataille and Pasquier Grenier before him, van Aelst was a man of very substantial means. It is not clear whether, like his forebears, van Aelst was purely a financier, or whether he also had a controlling interest in a number of workshops. He certainly played a key role in commissioning new cartoons, as is suggested by the appearance of his name woven into various designs, such as the *Passion* set in the Spanish royal collection (see fig. 55), of which one piece is dated 1507, or a later series, the *Story of David* (ca. 1520), of which a set survives in Sigmaringen.<sup>7</sup> On the basis of this evidence, van Aelst emerges as a powerful and creative force in the Brussels tapestry industry from the early years of the sixteenth century, linking financiers, artists, and producers for customized projects, and commissioning cartoons and weavings on his own speculative account. Although the names of a few other merchants and master weavers are mentioned in contemporary documentation, nobody seems to have come close to van Aelst's stature and importance at this period. Even during the mid-1510s, the only other name that occurs in association with very high-quality

production is that of Pieter de Pannemaker, who was court tapissier to Margaret of Austria from the mid-1510s. It is not until the late 1520s and early 1530s that we see the appearance of a larger number of competing high-quality tapestry merchants.

#### STYLISTIC AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BRUSSELS PRODUCTION, 1480–1515

If van Aelst enjoyed a privileged role with respect to the Habsburg and English courts, this must have been in part because of the quality of the cartoons at his disposal, which brings us to another of the factors that surely account for the rise of Brussels as a center of high-quality production during the late fifteenth century. With the presence of artists like Rogier van der Weyden and Vrancke van der Stockt, the Brussels workshops had access to highly skilled artists from the second third of the fifteenth century, and Rogier's style was widely propagated by Brussels artists in the decades following his death in 1464.<sup>8</sup> The role of Brussels artists in local tapestry production gained especial significance after 1476, when the Guild of Saint Luke was in conflict with the tapestry guild regarding the jurisdiction of cartoon production. The painters protested that the weavers were making their own cartoons, in contravention of the artists' monopoly on them. According to the agreement that was worked out between the two guilds, the

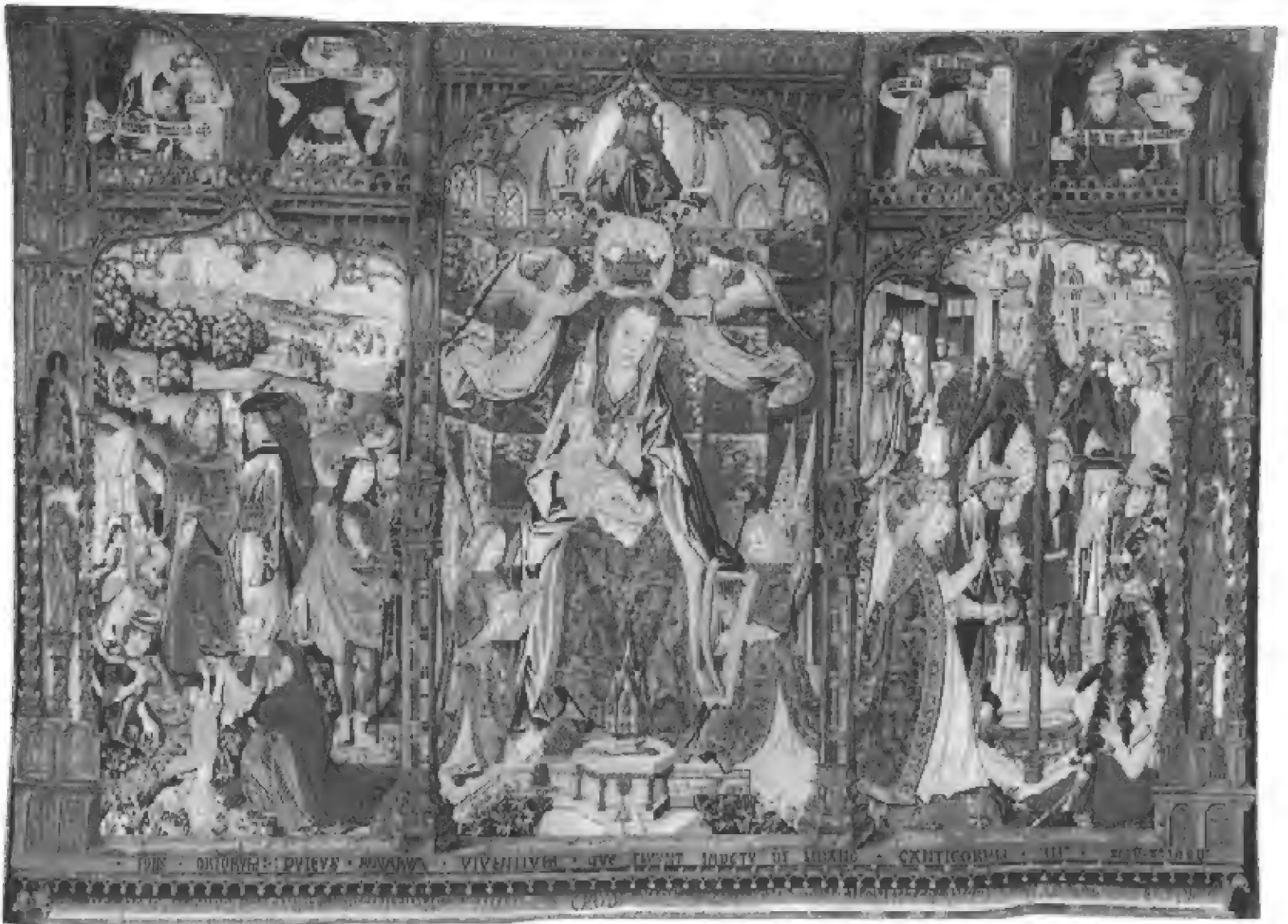


Fig. 56. *The Virgin Mary as the Source of Living Water*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, 1485. Wool and silk, 200 x 280 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

weavers were allowed to add flowers, shrubs, birds, and animals to verdure (*millefleurs*) designs and to elaborate existing cartoons with charcoal, crayon, and ink. Any other work was the domain of the painters—at the risk of a substantial fine for any transgressions—who thereby effectively gained a monopoly over the drawing of all figures and storiated designs.<sup>9</sup> While the motivation for this dispute must have been financial, the agreement had a twofold impact on the tapestry industry. First, it guaranteed the pictorial quality of Brussels tapestry design by ensuring that the tapestries were woven from good cartoons. Second, this stimulated a considerable development in the technical quality of Brussels weaving.

The technical development of Netherlandish weaving in the last quarter of the fifteenth century has received relatively little detailed analysis, in part because it falls between the disciplines of art history and material analysis. Generally speaking, however, this appears to have been the period during which weavers developed

and refined their techniques in order to reproduce the illusionistic effects created by artists who were more accustomed to the tonal potential of oil paint. Although there must have been some production of high-quality pictorial tapestries during the first two-thirds of the fifteenth century, the majority of surviving works display the relatively two-dimensional narrative and decorative aesthetic discussed above (pp. 48–49). The visual emphasis is on line and pattern, attempts at illusionism are limited, and spatial and volumetric considerations are indicated in a largely schematic fashion. From 1470, however, we find a number of high-quality tapestries in which more attention is paid to the reproduction of tactile and visual values, such as the shimmer of damask silk, the rich colors of velvet pile, the softness of fur, the mottled effect of marbling, and the appearance of flames and smoke. Carefully re-created through the use of a broader spectrum of colors, woven in finer and finer hachures, and exploiting the different



visual properties of wool, silk, and metallic thread, these effects appear in the weaving medium between 1470 and 1510, with ever-increasing refinement. In many ways this development is analogous to that taking place in the print mediums at the same time, as woodblock carvers and engravers developed a repertory of hachures and stippled effects to create the illusion of form and texture.<sup>10</sup>

In view of the content of the 1476 agreement between the painting and tapestry guilds, it can hardly be coincidental that a number of the tapestries that survive from the following years were essentially conceived as large panel paintings; the weavers clearly took great pains to emulate the effects of a painted image. Although none of these tapestries carries identifying marks, several of them are of a style or character that suggests they may be attributed to Brussels workshops. The *Adoration of the Magi* (cat. no. 6), commissioned by Archbishop Charles de Bourbon between 1476 and 1488, depicts figures with exquisitely modeled limbs and features, drawn in a style close to that of the Master of the View of Saint Gudule. The *Virgin Mary as the Source of Living Water*, dated 1485 (fig. 56), is closely related in design to the work of contemporary Brussels masters.<sup>11</sup> The retable structure employed in the *Virgin Mary* tapestry owes an obvious debt to the carved and painted retables that were becoming such an important industry in Brussels at this date. More significantly from a technical point of view, the design incorporates carefully modeled volumetric figures in realistic landscapes. Similarly ambitious effects are attempted in two other panels dating from the 1490s, the first, a reworking of Rogier van der Weyden's *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin Mary* (ca. 1490; fig. 57), the second, dated 1495, a scene of the *Mass of Saint Gregory* with the arms of the Holzschuher family (fig. 68), conceived in Rogier's style.<sup>12</sup>

The most ambitious extant exercise in this new illusionistic mode is a tapestry of somewhat different character. Dating from about 1495, it commemorates the Tournament with Swords that was held in Antwerp on October 19 and 20, 1494, to celebrate the investiture of Philip the Handsome as ruler of the Low Countries (fig. 58).<sup>13</sup> The border carries the arms of Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, who attended this event and took part in the tournaments along with Emperor Maximilian. Quite apart from the novelty of the attempt to convey the illusion of spatial perspective through the lattice of broken lances and tackle lying in the foreground, the tapestry incorporates carefully realized portraits, including those of the fifteen-year-old Philip, his sister Margaret, and their grandmother Margaret of York. While portraits were nothing new in tapestry, these are remarkable—at least among surviving tapestries—for the degree to which they attempt to represent the true appearance of the individuals, rather than relying



Fig. 57. *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin Mary*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, probably Brussels, ca. 1490. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 295 x 261 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 58. *Tournament of Frederick the Wise*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1495. Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 497 x 579 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes

on more traditional means of identification through heraldic devices. Indeed, the new technical proficiency of high-quality tapestry production seems to have ushered in a vogue for such portraits, often under the guises of participants in mythological or allegorical settings, to the extent that many of the finest early sixteenth-century tapestries are veritable portrait galleries of known and unknown dignitaries (see cat. nos. 13, 14, and 17, and fig. 62).

If these examples show that leading weavers were developing a high degree of technical skill, they also demonstrate the difficulty of reproducing spatial and aerial perspective effects in a medium that achieved tonal variation through the intersection of thousands of different-hued hachures of color. It was perhaps for this reason that, from the late 1490s, the period immediately after these woven pictures were produced, Brussels cartoonists seem to have returned to a more *retardataire* style of design, in which the tactile illusionism of the earlier experiments was retained but the more ambitious spatial and aerial effects were replaced by a decorative formula that once again emphasized surface pattern and ornament. In its early form this “pre-Renaissance” style was closely related to the structure and manner of the sculpted and painted retables for which Brussels was renowned at this date, while many of the figure types are conceived in the manner of Rogier.<sup>14</sup> The *pañños de oro* supplied to Joanna of Castile by Pieter van Aelst in 1502 (fig. 54)—perhaps from cartoons dating from the 1490s—and the *Glorification of Christ* (National Gallery, Washington) are typical of this style. Each tapestry is divided by columns and tracery into a number of compartments that are crowded with figures, all arranged close to the picture plane. Little attempt is made to represent space or movement. Instead, the emphasis is on visual complexity and decoration, from the jewels on the pilasters to the rich patterns and complex folds of the gowns and other clothing. This decorative emphasis is equally demonstrated by comparing the 1495 Nuremberg *Mass of Saint Gregory* (see fig. 68), in which the figures are placed within a perspectival interior, with the tapestry of the same subject presented to Isabella the Catholic in 1504 (cat. no. 12), in which the principal figures are subsumed within a more elaborate retable structure and the composition is crowded with additional figures and decorative elements.

Although, beginning in the early sixteenth century, Brussels tapestry designers gradually came to eschew the use of complex retable frames, most of the other elements of this decorative formula continued to characterize high-quality tapestry designs for the next ten to fifteen years. The series of the *Story of Saint John* and the *Story of David* (see fig. 59) in the Spanish royal collection, both dating from approximately 1505 to 1510, demonstrate the maturity of this style.<sup>15</sup> Scenes are presented in more open architectural

and landscape settings, but the compositions are still occupied by a large number of figures arranged in tiers close to the picture plane. The emphasis is on gorgeous costumes and complex textures. Movement is restricted to rhetorical gestures. Most of the figures are represented in profile or frontally, and, while depth is suggested by the decreasing size of the figures in the upper registers, there is little attempt at a rigorous illusion of aerial or spatial perspective. The main action tends to take place in the central foreground, with the tapestries frequently also depicting several subsidiary scenes at the sides or in the upper registers.

While the decorative style in which these pre-Renaissance tapestries were conceived was unquestionably conservative, it was certainly not because of a lack of aesthetic sophistication on the part of the cartoonists and weavers. Rather, this style reflects the extent to which the high-quality industry had discovered an aesthetic formula that was ideally suited to the scale, nature, and financial constraints of the tapestry medium. A design with an emphasis on perspectival illusion required the participation of very skilled weavers for extended periods of time. The smallest mistakes compromised the success of the illusion, and the larger the scene, the more complex the demands made upon the weaver to match subtle nuances of tone and color. In contrast, a design whose emphasis was linear and decorative was easier for the weaver. This is not to say that the cartoonists and weavers of the day avoided illusionistic devices, but rather that these were concentrated at the focal points of the tapestries, the majority of the surface being taken up by the decorative elements, richly patterned architectural details and folded textiles that must have been exacting to weave but were perhaps amenable to a more formulaic process.

Of course, it was exactly this visual richness that contemporary patrons wanted from tapestry. For the very wealthy, the complex patterns of the costumes also provided ample opportunity for the use of gilt-metallic thread, so that the tapestry surface approached the physical opulence of cloth of gold. For more modest but still deep pockets, the highlights of such patterns were executed in silk, whose sheen provides an effect similar to that of gilt thread. The care with which such material distinctions were observed is reflected in the contract that the Tournai town authorities drew up with the weaver Clément Sarrasin for a set of the *Story of Hercules*, intended as a gift for the governor of the town following its capture by the English in 1513. The contract stipulated that the tapestry was to be woven of the best wools and that the garments of all the principal figures were to be woven of silk, with yellow silk used to depict the highlights in gowns of cloth of gold, and green and blue silk for the highlights in gowns of velvet or damask so they would stand out against the





Fig. 59. *Bathsheba at the Fountain* from the *Story of David*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, ca. 1510. Wool and silk, 350 x 415 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

others. The weaver also contracted to use silk in the pillars, carpets, and tabernacles depicted, as well as in the border.<sup>16</sup>

The other advantage of this pre-Renaissance style was that the crowding of compositions with numerous figures, many of whom were peripheral to the main action, allowed cartoonists to adapt figures from one design to another, or to remove them altogether, a possibility that was highly attractive when tapestries were being commissioned for specific locations. Comparison of extant tapestries—for example, the *Bathsheba at the Fountain* in the Spanish royal collection (fig. 59) and the wider scene of the same subject in the Brussels town hall—demonstrates that “staffage” figures, evidently copied from pattern books, were readily adapted from one cartoon to another, to expand it to the necessary dimensions. The flexibility of this additive pre-Renaissance style played an important part in the commodification of lower- and medium-quality production during this period. It must have been these commercial factors—established practice, both among cartoonists and in the weaving ateliers, and the commercial success of a tried-and-true formula—that ensured the continuity of this pre-Renaissance style of design during the first two decades of the sixteenth century, first in Brussels, and then in other centers as they imitated the elements of this successful formula.

Very little is known of the artists and cartoonists involved in this production. Recent studies have shown the extent to which some of the finest of these pre-Renaissance designs resemble the work executed between 1485 and 1515 by Colyn de Coter (ca. 1455–1525), whose workshop produced both paintings and designs for

retables.<sup>17</sup> Although no documentation attaches his name to any specific design, the anatomy and physiognomy of certain figures in paintings by him such as the so-called *Passion of Strängnäs I* (ca. 1493; cathedral of Strängnäs, Sweden) and the richly patterned textiles in which they are clothed, even the complex pleats of their gowns, are so close to those of a number of the finer pre-Renaissance designs, such as the *pañós de oro* supplied by van Aelst to Joanna of Castile (see fig. 54) or the *Mass of Saint Gregory* (cat. no. 12), that it is tempting to assume that de Coter’s workshop may have been responsible for their cartoons. While this question deserves further consideration in regard to some of the finest contemporary tapestries, great caution is advisable in attributing works of lesser quality because of the evident freedom with which contemporary cartoonists “cut and pasted” figures from one composition to another.

If de Coter’s hand can only be detected on stylistic grounds, two other designers are more firmly linked to the pre-Renaissance style, although identification of their work is problematic for other reasons. The name of the first is provided by a rare contract regarding the design and weaving of a tapestry, the *Miraculous Communion of Herkinbald* (the king who, from his deathbed, slit his son’s throat as punishment for raping a woman), which was commissioned in 1513 for the church of Saint-Pierre in Louvain (fig. 60). According to the contract, the design was supplied by Master Jean of Brussels—almost certainly Jan van Roome, Margaret of Austria’s court artist—for a fee of 2.5 florins and two pots of wine, while the cartoon was painted by a “Philips den Schilder” for a

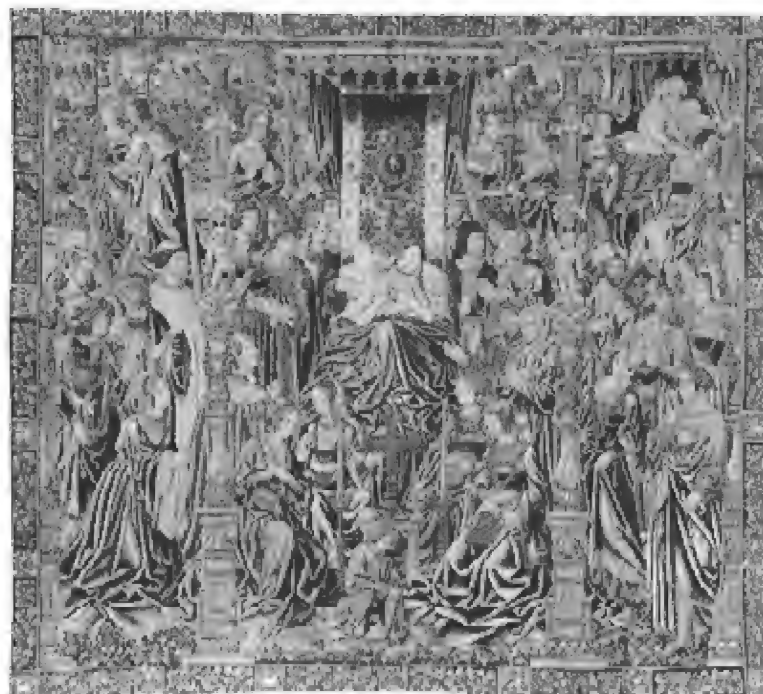


Fig. 60. *The Miraculous Communion of Herkinbald*. Tapestry probably designed by Jan van Roome, woven in Brussels, ca. 1513. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 387 x 430 cm. Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels

fee of 13.5 florins.<sup>18</sup> On the basis of this evidence, many of the pre-Renaissance-style tapestries have been attributed to van Roome, an assumption that has been discarded by recent historians because the design must reflect the cartoons of “Master Philip” much more than those of van Roome, and because the style in which the cartoonist was working appears to have been a generic one that characterized the work of many Brussels designs of this era. This does not imply that Jan van Roome was not an important tapestry designer during the first twenty years of the sixteenth century, just that we need to investigate this question much more critically than hitherto. Another conclusion mistakenly derived from the *Herkinbald* document is that the rare, dated piece to which it refers represents a seminal, even defining point in the development of tapestry design. This assumption disregards the extent to which the decorative formula not only was well established more than fifteen years earlier but had been developed by other artists into a much more elegant form, as evidenced by the designs of pieces such as the *Mass of Saint Gregory* (ca. 1500–1502; cat. no. 12) and the *Brussels Lamentation* (ca. 1510; cat. no. 14).

Another figure whose name appears in connection with these pre-Renaissance designs is Lenaart Knoest the elder (fl. 1501–17). He was recognized in 1516 by the Brussels weavers for the number of cartoons that he had supplied for their industry, and his name appears woven into a small tapestry, the *Discovery of the True Cross* (fig. 61).<sup>19</sup> Although many tapestries have been attributed to van Roome and Knoest on the basis of these designs, the sheer number of extant designs that share these formal qualities suggests that great caution should be exercised in making such attributions. Again, this is not to say that these artists did not play a very important role in contemporary design, or even that it is impossible (as is sometimes claimed) that they could have played a key role in producing so many designs. On the contrary, assuming sizable workshops and the delegation of work to assistants and cartoon specialists, the formulaic character of many pre-Renaissance designs would have allowed a small number of artists to dominate cartoon production, much as Bernaert van Orley, Pieter Coecke van Aelst, and Michiel Coxcie were to do later. Given our current state of knowledge, however, we ought not to accept such attributions too readily.

#### NETHERLANDISH PRODUCTION UNDER MARGARET AND MAXIMILIAN

With the death of Philip the Handsome in 1506 and the minority of his son and heir, Charles, Emperor Maximilian placed the stewardship of the Netherlands in the hands of Philip’s sister Margaret of Austria. She was to maintain this charge until her death because



Fig. 61. *The Discovery of the True Cross*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, ca. 1510. Wool and silk, 341 x 262 cm. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels

the vast extent of the territories that Charles inherited on his majority in 1515 led him to appoint her as his regent in the Netherlands. Margaret therefore exercised an important influence over the development of the Netherlandish tapestry industry during a crucial phase of its development. Although she lacked the funds that her ancestors had enjoyed, Margaret evidently shared their love of the tapestry medium, ensuring the careful preservation of the inherited Burgundian collection during her reign and developing a small but interesting collection of her own. Raised at the French court during the years in which Charles VIII was acquiring tapestries from Tournai and other Netherlandish centers, Margaret would form the basis of her own collection from the gifts and bequests that she received in the course of her short-lived marriages to Infante Juan of Spain, and Philibert II of Savoy. When Margaret left Spain in 1498, she took seventeen tapestries belonging to her and fifteen more that were presented by Isabella as a parting gift. Subsequently, Margaret was to acquire tapestries from a variety of Netherlandish manufactories, including heraldic and verdure tapestries from Bruges in 1509, allegorical tapestries (received as a gift) from Tournai in 1513, and heraldic tapestries



from Enghien between 1523 and 1528 (Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest).<sup>20</sup> Based on the diversity of sources from which Margaret acquired tapestries, it seems reasonable to conjecture that she was deliberately supporting the industry in each of these centers. However, there can be little question that it was the Brussels workshops that benefited most from her attentions.

Margaret's court was based in Mechelen, a few miles north of Brussels, partly to remove her from the turbulent and sometimes violent politics of the capital and partly because of the ongoing construction at the Coudenberg Palace; nevertheless, Brussels remained the administrative and ceremonial center of the Habsburg Netherlands.<sup>21</sup> As guardian of Philip's eldest son, Charles, later king of Spain (1516–56) and Holy Roman Emperor (1519–56), Margaret may have played an influential part in the developing taste for the moralizing and didactic allegories that were produced in the Brussels workshops in these years. Certainly, the humanist thinkers associated with her court must have been among those involved in the conception of some of the more elaborate themes. Notable examples are the series the *Triumphs of*

*Petrarch* with the figures depicted on chariots (ca. 1507–10; see cat. no. 13), the so-called *Moralidades* (ca. 1510; Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid), and the *Twelve Ages of Man* (ca. 1515; fig. 62).<sup>22</sup> The last includes a portrait of Margaret of Austria, and its complex iconographic scheme has been attributed to Hieronymus Buslidius (ca. 1470–1517), a friend of Erasmus and Thomas More, and an ecclesiastic in Margaret's Grand Council.<sup>23</sup>

Under Margaret's influence, her father Maximilian appears to have become a much more active patron of the Netherlandish tapestry industry. In 1510 he purchased tapestries of the *Triumphs of Caesar*, based on Italian engravings, from the Tournai merchant Arnould Poissonier, and in 1511 van Aelst provided Margaret with designs for a *Genealogy of the Kings of Portugal*, which she sent to Maximilian in Germany. In 1516 the court tapissier, the master weaver Pieter de Pannemaker, supplied a *Christ on the Cross* and a four-piece set of the *Story of David* to Maximilian.<sup>24</sup> Maximilian may also have played a more important role than has previously been realized in the conception and design of one of the most ambitious sets of the day, the enormous nine-piece *Honors*, an

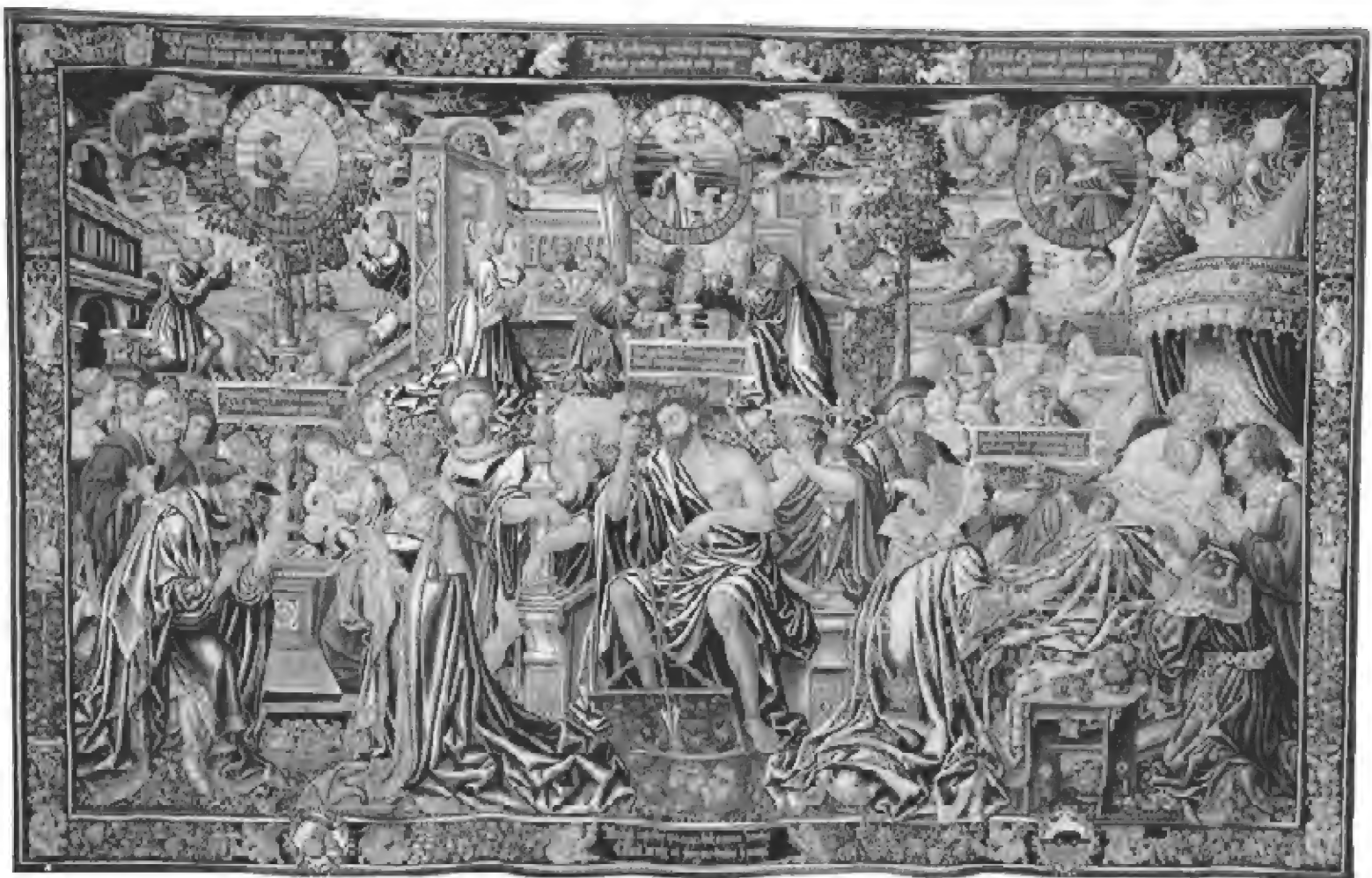


Fig. 62. *The Last Three Ages of Man, or Winter*, from the *Twelve Ages of Man*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, ca. 1515. Wool and silk, 445 x 742 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of The Hearst Foundation, in memory of William Randolph Hearst, 1953 (53.221.4)

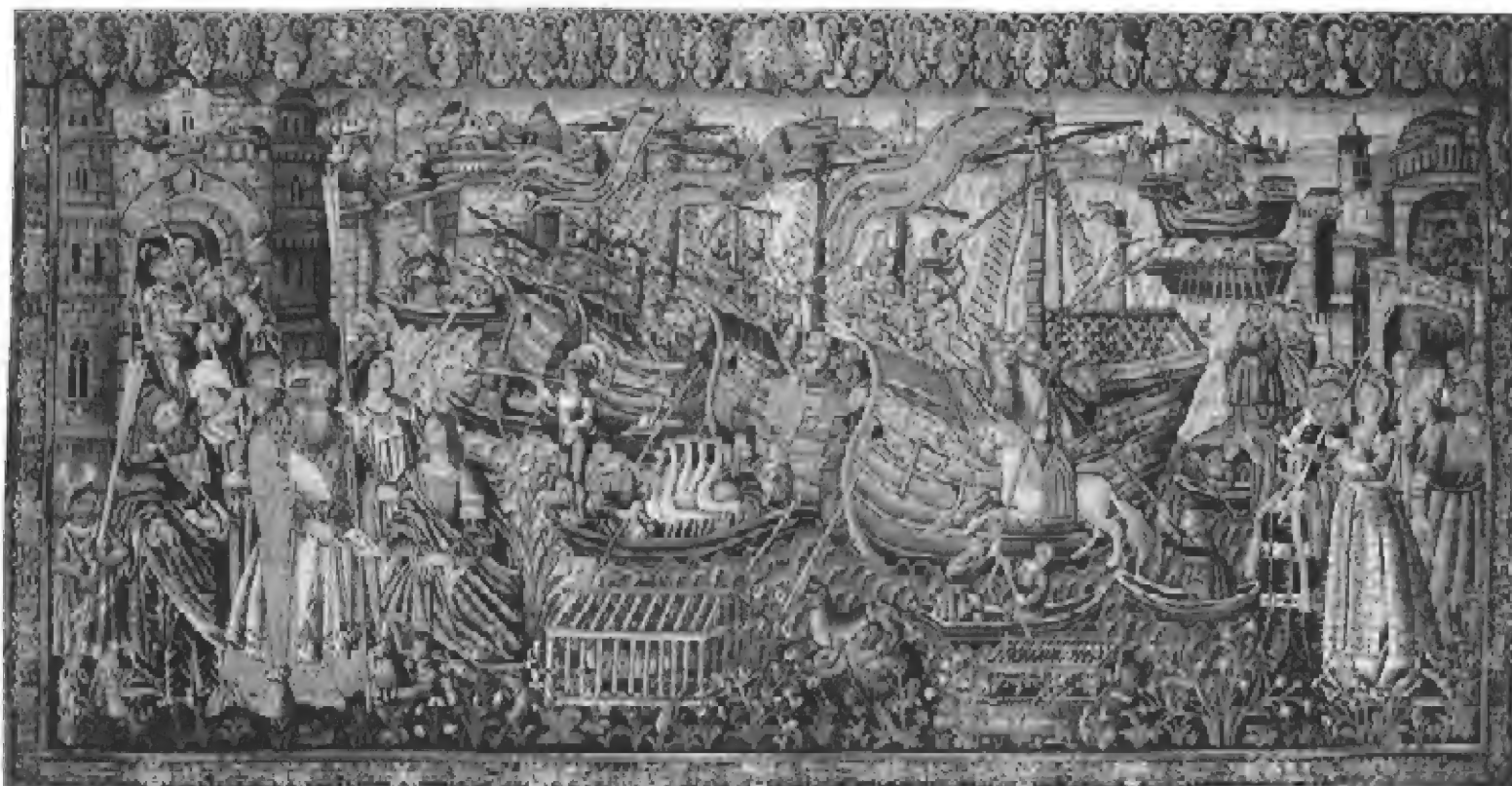


Fig. 63. *Landing at Calcutta* from the *Portuguese Explorers in the Indies*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, probably Tournai, ca. 1510. Wool, 400 x 760 cm. Banco Nacional Ultramarino, Lisbon

allegorical celebration of the imperial Habsburg dynasty (cat. no. 17). Because this was eventually woven for Charles V under van Aelst's direction during the early 1520s, it has generally been assumed that the designs were commissioned by Charles. However, the iconographic complexity and scale of the set suggest that it may have been conceived some years before, under the direction of Margaret and Maximilian (for a discussion of the dating and the conception of the series, see cat. no. 17).

#### OTHER CENTERS

Although Brussels became the preeminent center of high-quality production between 1490 and 1510, there was evidently considerable weaving activity in other centers. As noted above (p. 35), Philip the Handsome made various purchases from the Greniers of Tournai in 1504–6, including a fine set of *Portuguese Explorers in the Indies*, a subject that reflects the fascination with the New World that developed as tidings of discoveries in Asia and the Americas reached western Europe. The Greniers evidently enjoyed considerable success with this design series, and several fragmentary sets have survived (see fig. 63). Gypsies and Wanderers, invariably depicted as crooks and villains, evoked a similar fascination, and the Greniers evidently owned cartoons of these subjects as well.<sup>25</sup>

The Greniers were not the only leading tapestry entrepreneurs in Tournai. Accounts relating to merchant weavers such as Clément Sarrasin and Arnould Poissonier demonstrate the steady trade passing through their hands. Following the capture of Tournai by the English in 1513, the town workshops were thrown into a frenzy of activity producing tapestries such as the *City of Women*, *Hercules*, *Judith and Holofernes*, and the *Triumphs of Caesar* as gifts for the English king and his most influential courtiers, no doubt in expectation of lucrative commissions in the future. The quantity of work handled by these merchants is suggested by Poissonier's inventory and estate after his death in 1522. The inventory of his stock lists at least fourteen sets of tapestries, including the *Triumphs of Caesar* (two sets), the *Story of Holofernes* (two sets), *Calcou* (European explorers in Calcutta), the *Egyptians* (Gypsies), and *Hercules*, with a total surface area of 2,879 square ells (1,350 sq. m).<sup>26</sup> This and other documentation relating to the Tournai merchants provide the basis for the identification of a group of medium-quality tapestries that give a good idea of the type of product that Poissonier and his compatriots must have been offering: fairly simple, bold figures executed in a relatively limited palette of colors. It must have been sets like these that formed the bulk of the moderate-quality hangings in the collections of contemporary patrons like Jacques d'Amboise and



Cardinal Wolsey, in contrast to the smaller number of high-quality Brussels tapestries.<sup>27</sup>

Bruges was also a vital center that apparently enjoyed considerable success not only with its millefleurs and armorial millefleurs tapestries but also with figurative panels.<sup>28</sup> As discussed above, the earliest extant set that can be linked to Bruges with certainty is a fourteen-piece *Story of Saint Anatolius of Salins*, of which four pieces survive (Louvre, Paris; Musée de Dijon). Bruges ateliers appear to have continued to produce millefleurs armorials in considerable numbers during the first third of the sixteenth century. A panel with the arms of the Italian humanist Paolo Giovio, reliably attributed to a Bruges workshop, is probably typical of the finer type of production (fig. 125).<sup>29</sup>

Weaving also flourished in Enghien from the early years of the sixteenth century. Philip of Cleves-Ravenstein granted a charter to the local guild in 1513, after which all locally produced tapestries

had to be marked with a lead seal with the arms of the town and a letter E. In their early years, the Enghien workshops appear to have specialized in the production of heraldic tapestries.<sup>30</sup> Margaret of Austria, for one, purchased armorial tapestries from an Enghien workshop in 1523. Documentation also indicates a considerable volume of lower-quality production in Oudenaarde, Sint-Truiden, and other centers during the first quarter of the century, although no examples can be identified.<sup>31</sup>

#### EARLY ITALIAN INFLUENCE

Because the creation of the vast majority of Netherlandish tapestry cartoons was concentrated in the hands of artists who were used to producing them in a particular way and because of the success of the pre-Renaissance design formula that they evolved between 1495 and 1510, the character of tapestry design of this era appears to have been relatively insular, closed to the aesthetic developments being

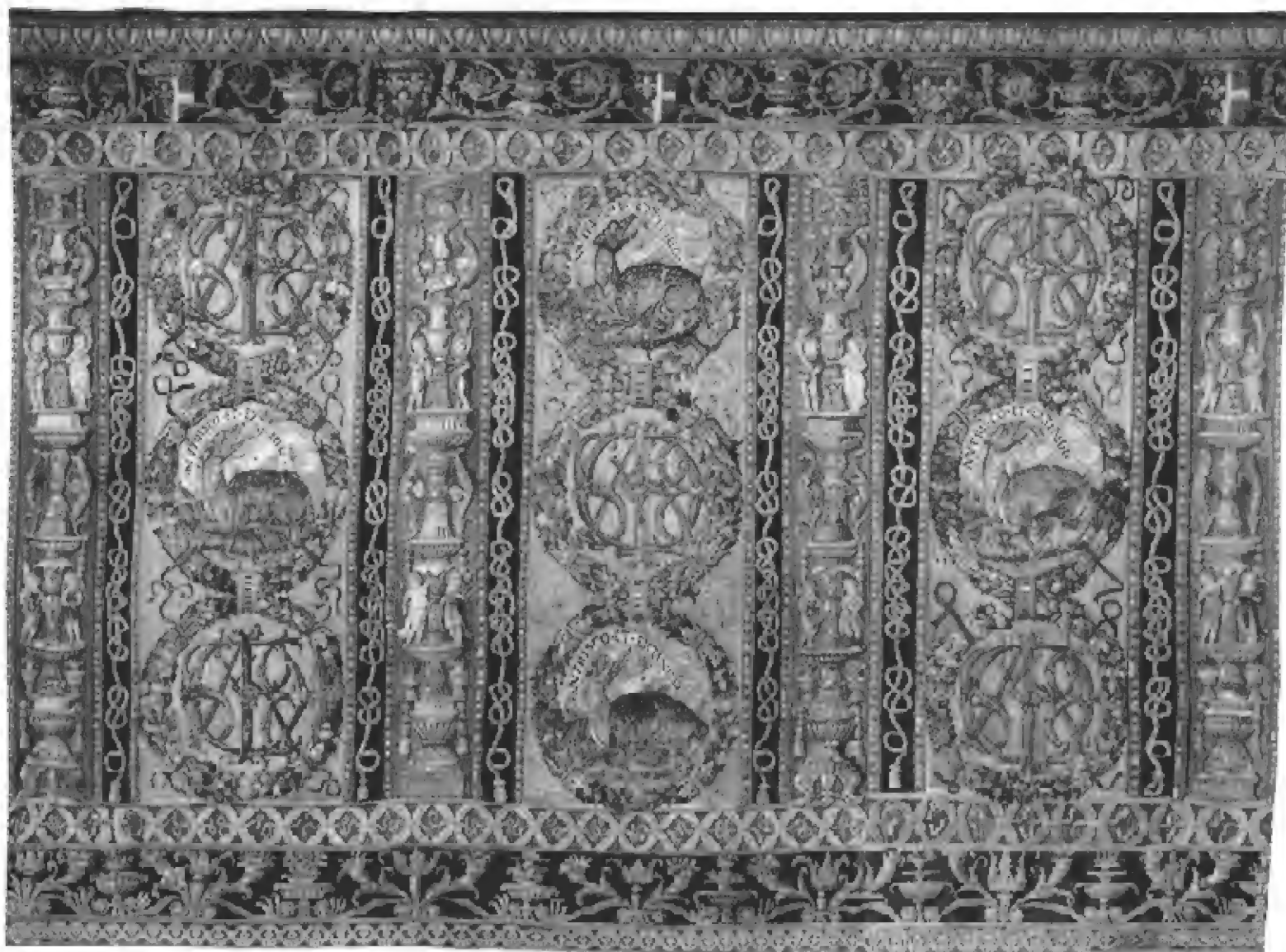


Fig. 64. *Arms and Devices of Louise of Savoy and Francis of Angoulême*. Tapestry woven in France or the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1512–14. Wool and silk, 350 x 470 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Charles Potter King Fund

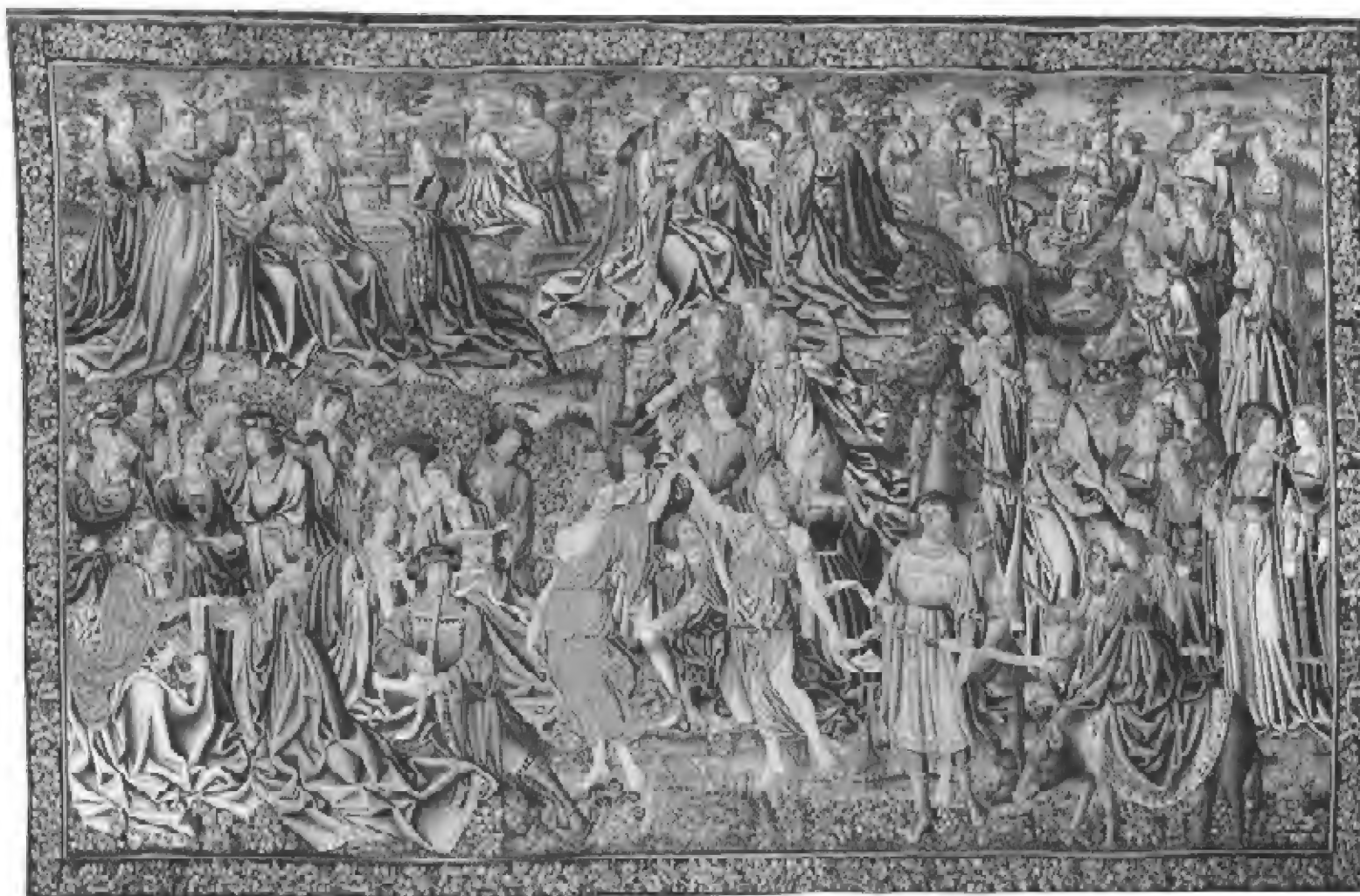


Fig. 65. *The Vices Beset Sinful Man* from the *Triumphs of the Virtues over the Vices*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, ca. 1515. Wool and silk, 411 x 650 cm. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels

made in Italian art. This, despite the fact that Italian prints and drawings were making their way to northern Europe.

Initially, the most marked effect was that the decorative elements of the Italian Renaissance vocabulary, particularly those exemplified in works of the Lombard school (which was especially accessible to northern patrons because of the French occupation of Milan from 1499 to 1513 and from 1515 to 1521), were appropriated and added to the Netherlandish canon of decorative devices. An early manifestation of this influence is visible in van Aelst's 1507 *Passion* series, where the trompe l'oeil frame incorporates putti, Renaissance balusters, and grotesques within a structure that is essentially Gothic in form (fig. 55). Similar motifs are to be found in a number of design series dating from late in the first decade of the 1500s and the early 1510s, such as the *Triumphs of Petrarch*, in which the triumphal chariots of the principal figures



Fig. 66. *Four Women Dancing*. Engraving after Andrea Mantegna, after 1497. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.5.3)



are decorated with a variety of Gothic tracery and Renaissance baluster motifs (cat. no. 13 and fig. 69). These designs also incorporate some “classical” buildings in the background, an incongruous contrast to the Gothic tracery of other architectural components included in the scenes.

A more ambitious use of Italianate forms is provided by a series of hangings, evidently part of a larger series, with the armorial devices of Louise of Savoy and her son Francis of Angoulême, later king of France, which can probably be dated between about 1512 and 1514 (fig. 64).<sup>32</sup> Here the “antique” motifs provide the principal decorative element in the main field of the design. Although an exact source has not been identified, the debt to engravings like those of Giovanni Pietro da Birago, created between 1505 and 1515, is readily evident.<sup>33</sup>

As larger numbers of engravings and drawings began to reach northern Europe, Netherlandish cartoonists began to borrow more substantial components. An engraving after Andrea Mantegna (fig. 66) appears to have provided the source for one of the dancing figures in the *Triumphs of the Virtues over the Vices*, a series dating from about 1515, sets of which were supplied to the bishop of Palencia in 1519 and to Cardinal Wolsey in 1520.<sup>34</sup> Another intriguing example of an Italian model being transposed to a Netherlandish tapestry design is provided by an exquisite *Lamentation* (cat. no. 14), dating from about 1510. The central composition is copied from a painting by Perugino (fig. 70), but the monumental character and simplified conception of the Italian source were entirely altered by the cartoonist, who set the central figures within a larger group, depicted everyone with richly decorated costumes, added subordinate narrative scenes, and developed the emotional pathos with the exquisitely rendered faces of the mourning figures. Few comparisons demonstrate the divergent aesthetics of the Netherlandish tapestry industry and contemporary Italian art so clearly. Of course, such borrowings were not restricted to Italian sources. Prints by northern European artists provided an equally rich source of material for the northern tapestry designers, as exemplified by the figure of a halberdier, borrowed from a Dürer engraving, which appears in a number of Netherlandish tapestries dating from the 1510s.<sup>35</sup>

A number of more ambitious exercises from about 1510 in the Italian style are extant. The Grenier merchants in Tournai owned a set of cartoons for a *Triumphs of Caesar* series that was based, in part, on engravings after Mantegna’s famous paintings of this subject. The earliest documented set was sold to the emperor Maximilian by Arnould Poissonier in 1510, and another set of the same subject was among the gifts presented by the Tournai town authorities to Sir Edward Poynings, governor of the city for

Henry VIII, following the capture of Tournai by the English in 1513. Surviving pieces from this series suggest that the design and the execution were relatively coarse.

As will be readily apparent from the foregoing examples, the general character of such borrowings was essentially fortuitous, rather than motivated by a more sophisticated wish to reproduce an Italian aesthetic. However, a more enlightened awareness of the potential of such decoration for the tapestry medium is manifested in a handful of commissions from the early 1510s. Interestingly, most of these appear to have been initiated by French patrons, a reflection of the continuing occupation of Milan by the French. Four pieces survive from the earliest of these, a *Life of Christ and the Virgin* that Jacques d’Amboise, bishop of Clermont (and brother of Georges d’Amboise, builder of the famously Italianate Gaillon château), presented in 1516 to the cathedral of Clermont (cat. no. 15). Presumably the series had been woven some years earlier. Although the materials and colors suggest that the set may have been made in the Netherlands,<sup>36</sup> the design is entirely Italianate. The interiors are conceived in dry and careful perspective, while the decorative details and the figures clearly derive from the hand of a Lombard artist. Although the identity of the artist or cartoonist is unknown, he was presumably a figure in the circle of artists working for Jacques’s nephew, Charles II Chaumont d’Amboise, the king’s lieutenant general in Milan from 1500 to 1511, or one of those who traveled north to work at Gaillon for Georges d’Amboise.

An equally dramatic transposition of an Italian design, possibly of even greater significance for the development of tapestry design at this era, is provided by a weaving of Leonardo da Vinci’s famous *Last Supper* fresco (fig. 67). On the basis of the heraldry in the borders, the work appears to have been made for Louise of Savoy and her son the future Francis I of France, before his marriage in 1514.<sup>37</sup> Although the heraldic reading on which this date depends is complex and not absolutely certain, it appears that this tapestry copy was a first ambitious demonstration of Francis’s interest in the great artist, an interest that eventually resulted, following their meeting in Italy after the Battle of Marignano, in Leonardo’s relocation to the royal manor of Cloux, where he spent the last two and a half years of his life. Thus, this exercise in the transposition of an important Italian work of art into the tapestry medium predates the famous Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* commission by at least a year. Given the rivalry that characterized relations among Raphael, Michaelangelo, and Leonardo at this date, and the keen interest in these artists on the part of their principal patron, Pope Leo X, it is tempting to think that knowledge of this tapestry could have spurred Leo in 1515 to commission Raphael to design a set of tapestries to hang in the Sistine Chapel.



Fig. 67. *The Last Supper*. Tapestry design after Leonardo da Vinci, woven in the Southern Netherlands, probably Brussels, ca. 1514. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 490 x 915 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

The Leonardo tapestry was evidently considered one of the great masterpieces in the French royal collection, and Francis subsequently presented it to Pope Clement VII—another great enthusiast of the tapestry medium—in 1533, on the occasion of the marriage of the dauphin to Catherine de' Medici, Clement's niece. On this occasion Paolo Giovio, the Italian humanist, described the tapestry as “Belgarum arte suprema” (made in the outstanding art of Flanders).<sup>38</sup>

The process by which the design of the original fresco became known in France is unclear. Although it has been suggested that the medium of dissemination may have been a woodcut, the faithfulness of the drawing and coloration of the figures to those of the fresco suggests that the cartoonist must have had a more accurate

source. According to Paolo Giovio, Louis XII wished to transfer Leonardo's fresco to France; he may have commissioned the copy of it that was executed in the convent of the Cordelière at Blois and that traditionally has been attributed to Andrea Solario.<sup>39</sup> While the relationship between the Blois fresco and the tapestry requires further investigation, it seems likely that it may have been a source for the *Last Supper* tapestry. Yet whatever the date and whatever the process of dissemination, Francis's decision to have Leonardo's famous work translated into the tapestry medium is additional testimony to French court patrons' important contribution to Netherlandish tapestry design in the 1510s. The commission is also the first example of Francis's lifelong practice of using tapestry as a vehicle to obtain designs by Italian artists whose work he admired.



1. "In detto paese tre cose sono di somma eccellenza. Tele sottilissime e belle in copia in Olanda; tapezzerie bellissime in figure in Brabante; la terza è la musica, la quale certamente si può dire che sia perfetta." Albèri 1839, pp. 11–12.
2. Schneebalg-Perelman 1969; Schneebalg-Perelman 1976; Mechelen 2000, pp. 13–15.
3. Schneebalg-Perelman 1969, p. 284; Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 32–34.
4. T. Campbell 1998a, p. 51. For the possibility that the Washington tapestry is the same one that was supplied to Henry, see Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, p. 183; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 198–99.
5. Junquera de Vega 1970, p. 21; Brussels 2000, pp. 18–23.
6. Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, p. 182; Mechelen 2000, p. 14.
7. Steppe 1976, pp. 215–17; Mechelen 2000, p. 14.
8. De Patoul and Van Schoute 1994, pp. 524–61; Delmarcel 2000, pp. 102–11.
9. Wauters 1878, pp. 48–49; Schneebalg-Perelman 1976, p. 167; Delmarcel 2000, pp. 102–3.
10. Boorsch and Orenstein 1997.
11. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 46; Delmarcel 2000, p. 103.
12. Cavallo 1993, pp. 32, 33, 39, 41; Göbel 1923, pp. 151–52.
13. Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 72–75; P. Ramade in Valenciennes 1995, pp. 240–44; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 52.
14. Périer-D'Ieteren and Paredes 2000.
15. Paredes in Brussels 2000, pp. 30–61.
16. Soil 1892, pp. 173–74; T. Campbell 1995–96, esp. pp. 45–47.
17. Delmarcel 2000, pp. 103–4; Périer-D'Ieteren and Paredes 2000, pp. 116–28.
18. Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 78–83; Dhanens in Brussels 1976, pp. 231–38.
19. E. Duverger 1989; Delmarcel 2000, p. 106.
20. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 97.
21. Smolar-Meynart 2000, pp. 91–98.
22. Mechelen 2000, pp. 41–44.
23. Standen 1969, pp. 163–68.
24. Göbel 1923, p. 309; Delmarcel 1992, p. 154.
25. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 165.
26. Soil 1892, pp. 47–48, 175–76, 322, 410–20.
27. T. Campbell 1996a; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 164–66.
28. Bruges 1987, pp. 59–86; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 180–87.
29. Adelson 1985d.
30. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 168–70.
31. Ibid., pp. 188–94.
32. Erlande-Brandenburg 1974, pp. 19–22.
33. Cavallo 1967, pp. 66–68; New York 1981, pp. 72–74.
34. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 67. For Wolsey's set, see T. Campbell 1996a, p. 109.
35. Cavallo 1993, p. 35.
36. On the basis of an examination of the reverse of the tapestry during recent conservation, Guy Delmarcel has tentatively suggested Bruges as the place of manufacture (correspondence with the author).
37. Erlande-Brandenburg 1974, pp. 25–31.
38. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 69, 72.
39. Cogliati Arano 1965, pp. 38–39; D. A. Brown 1987, p. 202, n. 145. Solario's copy is now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts et Archéologique, Blois.

## The Mass of Saint Gregory

Designed attributed to Colyn de Coter or an artist in his circle, ca. 1500–1502  
 Woven in Brussels for, or in the workshop of, Pieter van Aelst, ca. 1502–4  
 Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
 342 x 407 cm (11 ft. 2¼ in. x 13 ft. 4¼ in.)  
 8½–9 warps per cm  
 Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid  
 (TA-7/2, 10005810)

**PROVENANCE:** 1504, one of a group of tapestries given to Isabella the Catholic by Joanna of Castile; 1505, returned to Joanna following Isabella's death and taken by her to the castle of Tordesillas (near Valladolid); 1526, transferred to the wardrobe of Charles V; inherited by Philip II; 1598, listed in inventory of his collection; thence by descent in the Spanish royal collection, and listed in the inventories of Carlos II (1701–3) and Carlos III (1788), and in the 1880 inventory of Spanish royal tapestries.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 13–14; Sánchez Cantón 1950, pp. 97, 99–100, 117–18, 149–50; d'Hulst 1960, pp. 115–20; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 30, 32 (with bibliography); Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 40; Herrero in Barcelona and Madrid 1992, pp. 42–44; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 44, 52; Delmarcel 1999b, pp. 166–67, 178 no. 87; Paredes, Delmarcel, and Paredes and Périer-D'Iteren in Brussels 2000, pp. 14–17, 101, 121–28.

**CONDITION:** Excellent, considering age. The lighter colors somewhat faded, with spot repairs throughout.

The *Mass of Saint Gregory* was among a group of very fine tapestries that the Brussels merchant Pieter van Edingen (called Pieter van Aelst) sold to Philip the Handsome, duke of Burgundy, and his wife, Joanna of Castile, during the opening years of the sixteenth century. Woven in the richest materials, it demonstrates the high technical quality that the leading Brussels workshops were able to produce by that date and the increasing range of pictorial effects that they could now attain in wool, silk, and metallic thread. With its static and ornamental design, it also typifies the *retardataire* style that characterized the finest contemporary production.

### Description

According to legend, Saint Gregory (ca. 540–604; pope 590–604) was celebrating mass in the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in

Rome when a bystander doubted the real presence of Christ in the host. As Gregory continued to pray, Christ appeared to him on the altar, surrounded by the instruments of the Passion and displaying his wounds. This forms the subject of the central section of the tapestry, where Christ rises from the tomb, naked save for a cloth around his hips, the blood of his wounds plainly visible. The tomb is decorated with jewels and inset panels representing flowers symbolic of the Passion. The vision is framed by a cloth of gold, supported at either side by an angel, which is embroidered with the symbols of the Passion, the *arma Christi*, a pseudoheraldic concept that became popular in medieval iconography in the course of the late fifteenth century. On the altar in front of Christ there is a covered pyx for the Host, flanked by two candles. To the left, a missal is open at a page that carries an illumination of the Crucifixion (an image that echoes the scene in the upper right corner of the tapestry). These objects stand on a damask cloth, which is placed, in turn, over a velvet cloth-of-gold altar frontal.

Gregory kneels before the altar, his eyes raised toward the vision above. He is robed in a red cloth-of-gold cope over a green dalmatic with a jeweled hem and a white surplice, whose hem carries a red inscription that includes the word *BRVXEL* and other letters whose meaning is less clear. The orphreys are elaborately embroidered and feature the papal arms in the center. Six ecclesiastics attend the saint, including two cardinals who carry the papal miter and cross. The lappets of the miter carry an illegible inscription. Two archbishops flank the cardinals. The one on the left wears a cloth-of-gold cope with embroidered strawberry plants (symbolic of the Passion) around the edge, and an inscription, *IHS·MA*, on the hem of his blue velvet dalmatic (the sacred monogram and the first two letters of the Virgin's name). The archbishop to the right wears a cloth-of-gold dalmatic beneath a blue velvet cope and orphreys embroidered with figures of saints. The lappets of his miter carry the letters *AH*. A crowd of spectators stands at either side of the altar, with the windows and wooden roof









of the chapel visible behind. Although the perspective of the scene is not rigorous, the orthogonals converge generally on the figure of Christ. Gregory and his assistants kneel on a polychrome tiled floor. In front of this, a thin strip of ground is covered with flowers, strawberries, plantains, poppies, and daisies, echoing those behind the altar and again symbolic of the Passion.

The central scene is divided from the side sections by thin but ornate architectural elements, in a composition that imitates the tripartite structure of a retable, with a central panel and wings at either side. Each of the side sections is divided into two separate panels, in which the upper register depicts scenes from the Passion of Christ. At the left, we see Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, and, in the foreground, the moment when Judas betrayed him by kissing him, the prearranged code that identified Christ to the waiting Roman soldiers (Matthew 26:48). Christ holds the ear of a Roman soldier that Saint Peter had cut off in a futile effort to protect him. In the foreground of the right panel, Christ is carrying the cross on the way to Calvary. The Crucifixion appears in the background, the cross flanked by the Virgin and Saint John.

The lower sections of the side panels depict two seated figures with banderoles carrying inscriptions that refer to the Eucharist. The Old Testament king David is shown on the left in a cloth-of-gold tunic beneath an ermine-lined red velvet cloak. He wears an archaic hat and raises one hand in blessing, while the other holds a book on his knee from which a banderole scrolls, with the inscription *Pane[m] a[n]gelorum manducavit homo David* (Man shall eat the bread of angels David), a quotation from Psalms 78:25, which was taken as a prediction of the Eucharist. The figure at the right is identified as Augustine by an inscription. He wears sumptuous ecclesiastical garments and holds a jewel-encrusted staff in one hand and a sacred heart in the other. The banderole draped over his knee reads, *Sacramentum est i[n]visibilis g[r]aci[e] visibilis forma* (The sacrament is the visible form of invisible grace).

#### Iconography

No mention of this vision is given in the early biographies of Pope Gregory the Great, nor is it mentioned in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden*

*Legend* of the late thirteenth century. It probably originated in Rome, in association with the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, where the vision is supposed to have taken place. An early-sixteenth-century engraving records the appearance of a twelfth-century Byzantine icon then hanging in the chapel dedicated to Gregory the Great. According to tradition, Gregory placed it there to commemorate his vision, but as Mâle has suggested, this belief may have developed as an explanation for the presence of this striking image, the earliest known rendition of the Man of Sorrows, which was to become such a popular devotional image, both independently and in association with Gregory, during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> The popularity of this subject must have derived in part from the generous indulgences with which it was associated. According to fifteenth-century belief, one would receive one thousand years of remission if, following confession, one recited seven Paternosters, seven Ave Marias, and seven short prayers called "les oraisons de saint Grégoire" in front of the image of the Man of Sorrows—the number of years was augmented by popes in the course of the century. The popularity of Gregorian imagery diminished during the Reformation, as the concept of indulgences came under attack from the Protestant movement.<sup>3</sup>

#### Patron

This is one of two tapestries of Gregory listed in the inventory of Isabella the Catholic's possessions after her death in 1504; one, of smaller dimensions, had been purchased in 1504 from the merchant Matías de Guirla at Medina del Campo, and Isabella left it to her daughter Maria, queen of Portugal (r. 1498–1517).<sup>4</sup> According to the 1505 Act of Discharge, the second piece, whose larger dimensions correspond to those of catalogue number 12, was a gift to Isabella from her daughter Joanna of Castile (Joanna the Mad). As such, Ferdinand directed that it should be returned to her, along with a number of other tapestries that she had given Isabella, including the famous *paños de oro* set of the *Veneration of the Virgin* (see fig. 54).<sup>5</sup> It remained with Joanna at the palace at Tordesillas until 1526, when it was transferred to the possession of Charles V (Joanna's son) and thence by descent into the Spanish royal collection.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that Isabella had two examples of this design in her collection led to some confusion in the early-twentieth-century literature and the mistaken assumption that the extant piece was the one supplied to Isabella in 1504 by Matías de Guirla, a mistake that has been reiterated in some recent literature.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the detailed descriptions and measurements provided by the inventory leave no room for doubt in this matter. The extant piece was the one gifted to Isabella by her daughter Joanna and son-in-law Philip, duke of Burgundy.<sup>8</sup>

Isabella's two *Mass of Saint Gregory* tapestries were not the first of this design. An earlier version, apparently woven from a less elaborate cartoon, with the arms of the Holzschuher family and the date 1495, survives in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg (fig. 68). The 1518 inventory of the papal collection also lists a *Mass of Saint Gregory* among the tapestries of the time of Julius II (pope 1503–13), which provides circumstantial rather than certain evidence that he was responsible for purchasing it, as the provenance information provided by this inventory is frequently inaccurate. Considering the nature of the subject, and the loving attention paid to the papal paraphernalia that it depicts, it is tempting to suspect that the design of this tapestry could equally well have been commissioned by an earlier papal patron, perhaps Innocent VIII or Alexander VI.

#### Place and Date of Manufacture

The *Mass of Saint Gregory* epitomizes the finest-quality production of the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, and its Netherlandish origin has long been recognized.<sup>9</sup> Göbel was the first commentator to suggest that it was woven in Brussels, on the basis of the inscription BRVXEL on the edge of Pope Gregory's robe. Under the influence of the mistaken assumption that this tapestry was to be identified with the one supplied to Isabella the Catholic by Matías de Guirla, Göbel interpreted the other letters in this inscription as ERLAS, taking this as a reference to the name of that merchant.<sup>10</sup> However, with the recognition that this tapestry was actually among those given to Isabella by Philip of Burgundy and Joanna of Castile, and with the knowledge that the *paños de oro* tapestries were supplied by the



merchant Pieter van Aelst, recent commentators have realized that it is more likely to have been among those supplied by van Aelst, who traveled to Spain with Philip and Joanna in 1502 and 1504.<sup>11</sup> Support for this supposition may be provided by the letters in the lowest part of Gregory's robes, which can be read as a stylized form of the merchant's surname, with the A and E and S and T joined together on either side of the L. Van Aelst's name certainly appears in at least two other tapestries from sets that were presumably woven from cartoons belonging to this merchant. In the first case, the letters A·E·L·S·T· appear on the hem of the cloak of Simon of Cyrene in a scene of Christ on the way to Calvary, of which duplicate weavings survive in the Spanish royal collection (ca. 1507) and in Trent (the latter supplied to Cardinal Bernardo Cles in 1530).<sup>12</sup> In the second case, the letters appear on the robe of King David's messenger in a panel of the *Story of David* at Sigmaringen castle, along with the inscription BRUES.<sup>13</sup>

Whether or not the letters on Gregory's cope are to be read as a stylized version of van Aelst's name, it seems likely that this tapestry was woven from a cartoon that belonged to van Aelst, while the presence of the inscription BRUXEL confirms that this extraordinarily fine tapestry was made in a Brussels workshop.

#### Artist

The model for inscriptions like those that appear on the hems of the garments in this tapestry was provided by similar inscriptions that Brussels artists were incorporating in their paintings and altar panels during the late fifteenth century. It is especially close in form to those painted by Colyn de Coter (ca. 1455–1525), one of the leading Brussels artists of the day. At least three paintings by de Coter survive with analogous inscriptions. For example, a panel of *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* that he painted before 1493 carries an inscription COLYN.DE.COTER PINGIT.ME.IN.BRABANCIA I BRUSELLE (Parish Church of Vieuve, Cosne-d'Allier).<sup>14</sup>

The analogy with de Coter's inscriptions is interesting, because, as noted above, the costumes, poses, and features of the figures of the *Gregory* tapestry are remarkably close in style to those in works by de Coter. Indeed, although no documentation of de Coter's involvement with the Brussels tapestry work-



Detail of cat. no. 12

shops has survived (all the Brussels tapestry guild records were destroyed during the French bombardment of Brussels in 1695), the stylistic analogies between de Coter's work and the *Gregory* tapestry are so marked as to suggest that his workshop was almost certainly responsible for its production. Another intriguing point of contact is provided by the fact that de Coter's workshop

was intimately involved with producing designs and painted panels for the sculpted retables for which Brussels was so renowned at this date. Although he would not have been the first designer to introduce this form to the tapestry medium, he certainly understood the potential of the retable structure as a decorative and narrative device as well as any other artist then practicing in Brussels.



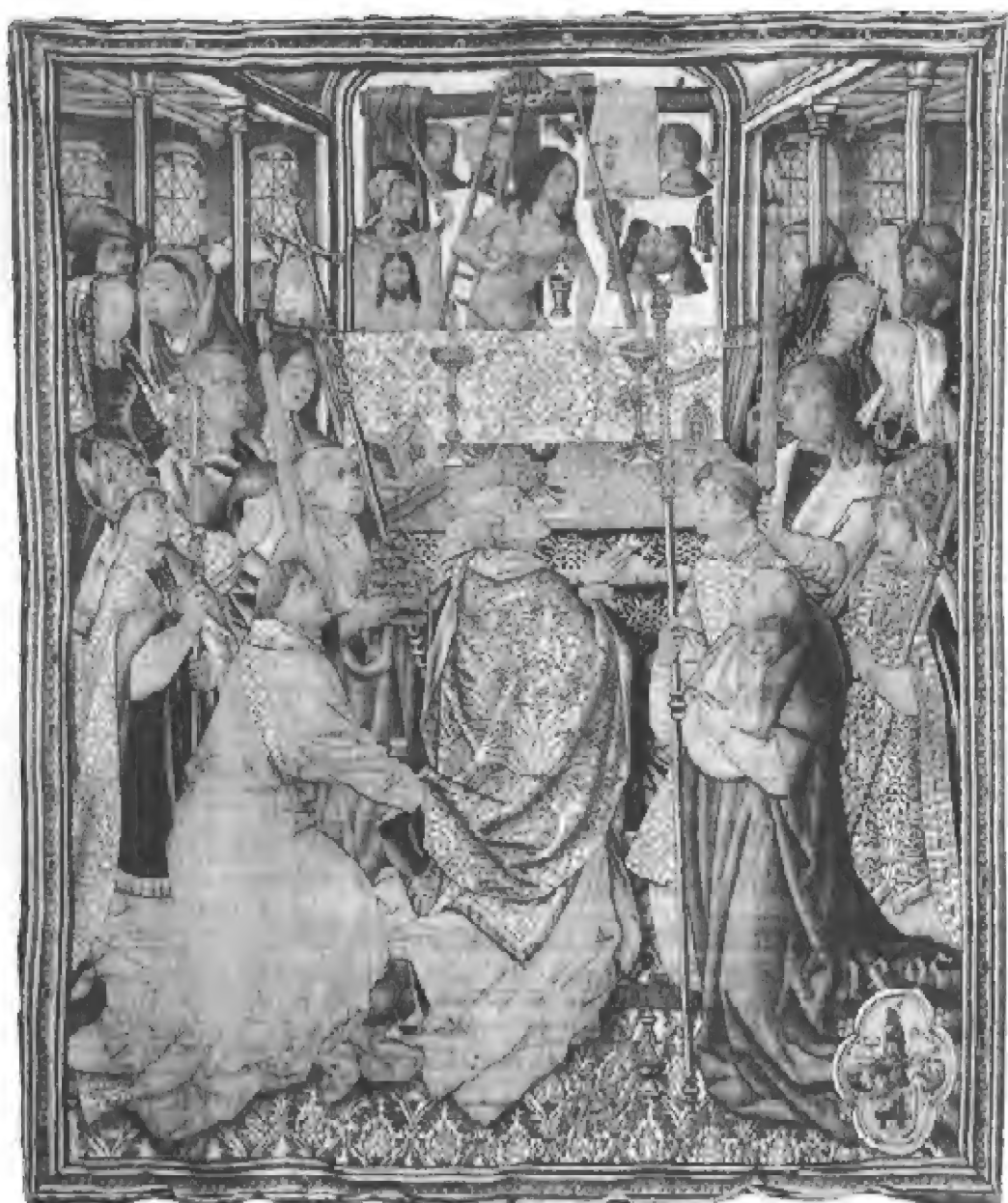


Fig. 68. *The Mass of Saint Gregory*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, 1495. Wool and silk, 296 x 244 cm. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

#### *Precedents and Earlier Weavings*

The compositional elements of the *Mass of Saint Gregory* look back to a number of precedents by Rogier van der Weyden and Vrancke van der Stockt, but the most immediate model appears to have been a detail of this subject in a larger tapestry that was part of a design series depicting the twelve articles of the Creed (Museo d'Arte Sacra, Pienza), probably conceived in the early 1490s.<sup>15</sup> The designer of the

Madrid *Mass* followed this earlier version for the general arrangement of his figures but elaborated the earlier model with greater narrative and decorative detail. Considering the stylistic similarities between the figures, costumes, and structuring of the *Creed* series with the *Mass of Saint Gregory* and various altarpieces attributed to de Coter, it is possible that his workshop was also responsible for the design of that series.

As we have seen, the design had been woven in 1495 from an earlier cartoon that included fewer figures in the throng that crowds in on either side of the altar, and lacked the subsidiary scenes that appear on either side of the Madrid tapestry. The decorative details of the costumes and floor tiles are also different, so it seems reasonable to infer that the Nuremberg tapestry records the appearance of an earlier cartoon, designed by Colyn de Coter in the early 1490s and that the Madrid tapestry reflects a later version of the design, painted by de Coter's workshop about 1500. Although we know little about the copyright of tapestry designs, the likelihood that van Aelst supplied the later version to Joanna of Castile suggests that the earlier cartoon also belonged to him, thus indicating an ongoing relationship between de Coter and van Aelst during these years. A further ramification of the attribution of the *Gregory* design to de Coter is that, if correct, it associates the artist with another very important design series of the day, the so-called *Redemption of Man* series, an enormous religious allegory that features narrator figures in the corners who are almost identical to the David in the left foreground of the *Mass of Saint Gregory*.<sup>16</sup>

1. Beer 1891, p. cxxix, no. 8357; Delmarcel 1999b, p. 170, no. 29; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 30, 32.
2. Mâle 1908, p. 92.
3. Ibid., pp. 93–97.
4. Sánchez Cantón 1950, pp. 117–18.
5. Ibid., pp. 149–50.
6. Beer 1891, p. cxxix; Delmarcel 1999b, pp. 166–67, no. 87.
7. Herrero in Barcelona and Madrid 1992, p. 42; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 44 (both with mistaken identifications); Delmarcel 1999b, pp. 166–67, 178 no. 87 (with correct identification).
8. Sánchez Cantón 1950, pp. 97, 99–100, 117–18, 149–50.
9. Valencia de Don Juan 1903, vol. 1, pp. 3, 5; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 13–14.
10. Göbel 1923, pp. 151, 152, 303, 409.
11. D'Hulst 1960, pp. 115–20.
12. Steppe in Brussels 1976, pp. 215–17; Castelnovo 1990.
13. Crick-Kuntziger 1936; Mechelen 2000, p. 14.
14. Périer-D'Ieteren 1985, figs. 126, 127; Paredes and Périer-D'Ieteren in Brussels 2000, pp. 125–26.
15. Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 40.
16. Cavallo 1993, pp. 421–45.



## The Triumph of Fame over Death

From a six-piece set of the *Triumphs of Petrarch*  
 Designer unknown, Southern Netherlands, 1507,  
 with some alterations of the cartoon before ca. 1525  
 Woven in an unknown workshop, Brussels, ca. 1520–25  
 Wool and silk  
 452 x 814 cm (14 ft. 10 in. x 26 ft. 8 1/2 in.)  
 7 warps per cm  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (BK-1959-98)  
 (not in exhibition)

PROVENANCE: Before 1925, château of Malesherbes (Loiret), Duke Levis de Mirepoix; Mrs. Wilkinson, Paris; Mr. and Mrs. R. Marsens and family, Lausanne; 1959, acquired by the Rijksmuseum with assistance from the Vereniging Rembrandt and contributions from the Nationale Vereniging Caritas and the Jubilee Fund on the occasion of the departure of the museum's chief director, Jhr. Dr. D. C. Röell.

REFERENCES: Essling and Müntz 1902, pp. 206–20; Erkelens 1962b, pp. 4, 7, 29–34; Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 35–38 (with bibliog.); Delmarcel 1989; Hartkamp-Jonxis 2000.

CONDITION: There are small areas of repair throughout, either by darning or by reweaving. In the lower section, 90 cm from the bottom, there is a very faded strip across the whole width where the tapestry has been rewoven, presumably along the line of a fold. The areas of reweaving have faded more rapidly than the surrounding tapestry.

The *Triumph of Fame over Death* derives from a six-piece set of the *Triumphs of Petrarch*, of which the other pieces are now lost. The subject is based on the cycle of allegorical poems *I trionfi*, written by Petrarch (1304–1374) between 1352 and 1374. Combining superstition with humanist erudition, and anecdote with moral admonition, these poems provided rich material for artists. The subject was widely illustrated in Italy from the late fourteenth century, primarily on *cassoni* and in book illuminations but also in the other decorative arts.<sup>1</sup> The earliest treatment of the Petrarchan theme in Northern tapestry may have been the three-piece set of *Fama* that Philip the Bold commissioned from the Paris tapestry merchant Pierre de Beaumetz in 1399. Evidence of a more elaborate treatment of the subject is provided by documentation relating to a set of this subject that was woven for Giovanni de' Medici during the 1450s (see above, pp. 45–46, 88). In that

case, the cartoons were painted in the Netherlands from designs sent from Italy. The high cost to Giovanni reflects that the cartoons were subsequently returned to the patron (instead of remaining in the merchant's hands as was more usual), but it was presumably through commissions like these that the Petrarchan theme entered the repertoire of Northern tapestry design. From the end of the fifteenth century, *Triumphs* tapestries are recorded in increasing numbers in the collections of the northern European courts. One popular design series of about 1500, of which Isabella the Catholic is known to have owned a set by 1504, depicted the Triumphs as a sequence of scenes with courtly figures standing in garden gazebos.<sup>2</sup> This series may, in turn, have provided the inspiration for the more elaborate series from which catalogue number 13 derives. Evidently designed by one of the leading artist-cartoonist teams active in Brussels in the early sixteenth century, the series enjoyed considerable popularity in the 1510s. Sets of this design are recorded in the collection of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey and Henry VIII and in the French royal collection, among others.

### Description

Petrarch's *Trionfi* describes a vision in which the poet sees a sequence of triumphal processions, each celebrating the victory of a different allegorical personification. Within each of the six poems that make up the cycle, the main figure in the previous Triumph is replaced by a new victor, surrounded by personages from classical mythology, the Bible, or history, whose lives exemplified the victor's power. The cycle begins with the *Triumph of Love*, followed in succession by the *Triumph of Chastity over Love*, the *Triumph of Death over Chastity*, the *Triumph of Fame over Death*, the *Triumph of Time over Fame*, and the *Triumph of Eternity over Time*. Although in Petrarch only Love has a triumphal chariot, which is drawn by four white horses, representations of the Triumphs from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries onward gave each victor a triumphal carriage, with its own team of animals: Chastity, for example, is drawn by uni-

corns, Death by buffalo (wild oxen), and Fame by elephants.

In the present tapestry, the *Triumph of Fame over Death*, the crowded image is composed of two scenes. Fame's conquest of Death is represented in the left third. Death's chariot, drawn by four buffalo, approaches from the far left; it is surmounted by Atropos, of the Three Fates the one who cut the thread of life. Chastity, whom she has conquered, lies at her feet. However, Atropos, in her turn, succumbs to the force of the blast from the trumpet of Fame—flying to her right—and tumbles from the car with outstretched arms. The other two Fates—Lachesis, with the spindle to dole out the thread of life, and Clotho, with the thread of life a rope around her neck—are under the chariot's wheels. Various important figures, such as a pope, a king, an emperor, and a cardinal, are also crushed by the car and the team of buffalo. Behind the car of Death, in a desolate landscape with dead trees and ruins, legendary Greek and medieval heroes rise from their graves summoned by Fame's trumpet call. Inscriptions identify them as Jason, Paris, King Arthur, Charlemagne, Roland, Tristram, Pyrrhus, Galahad, King Priam, Hercules, Saladin, and Menelaus.

The main scene, occupying the right two-thirds of the tapestry, depicts Fame's triumphal procession. From a town on the hill in the middle of the tapestry come the martyrs, scholars, warriors, and heroes who have been selected by Fame. The distinctive character of some of these figures' faces suggests that they may be portraits of contemporary people. At the right, a second column approaches on horseback from a city with buildings resembling the Colosseum and the Pantheon. In the foreground, a mass of figures, several of whom are identified by inscriptions, surrounds Fame's chariot. They include Alexander the Great, with a plumed helmet and a staff of authority at his side; Scipio, whose helmet has wings and a bird's head; Pompey, carrying a red banner strewn with eyes (the standard of Fame); Fabius Maximus; Nero; Claudius; and Manlius Torquatus. They are led by Caesar, the first



La mort me dunt parz de la vengeance  
 Desseins de ses puez Mais n'avez ses effors  
 Pour faire les haults fais de gens mort



GIOTO + GIOVANNI DI PAPA  
 1370-1375 + 1375-1380



Quia nunc mori di l' morte hunc l'ophat  
 de gregu incipit morte l'ale d'at yda





Qui par uche ont meriter gloire a pechie le bon fait de leur loe loe bon amour  
Justice bene uent iungis conuolact De lehrus le grand lac. Doublance

et de moiet a l'ab. p. de. l'au. p. de.  
le lehrus uichis l'au. l'au.



emperor, who rides a brown horse, has a long gray beard, carries a raised sword, and has the imperial two-headed eagle woven into his tunic.

To Caesar's left, sitting sidesaddle on a white horse is a woman looking directly toward the viewer. She holds a large sword pointed upward and wears a mantle lined with ermine, a crown, and a necklace. Despite her prominent position, this figure is not identified by an inscription. The Star of David on her saddle may indicate that she is a heroine from the Bible or from Jewish history. Alternatively, she may represent one of the Virtues. The same figures of this queen and Caesar on horseback are shown, although in somewhat different clothing, in a set of the *Moralidades* from the Habsburg collection (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid), woven in Brussels about 1515.<sup>3</sup> There, this woman, seated on a mythical animal, is identified by an inscription as Justice. Her counterpart in the *Triumph of Fame* may also represent Justice, or

she may represent Purity because of the ermine mantle. But she may simply embody Fame who was sometimes represented in fifteenth century Italian images as a seated female figure holding a sword pointing upward.<sup>4</sup>

At the center of this crowd winged Fame stands proudly erect on her chariot, which is drawn by four elephants. She is clothed in a robe of red brocade, with her attribute, the trumpet, in her left hand. She glances down obliquely to the right where Death, personified by Atropos, sits defeated on the front of the vehicle. The mahout leading the elephants sits on the nearest beast, with his head turned, his back to the viewer, and a club in his right hand.

In the narrow borders there are alternating branches of roses, pansies, and grapes on a dark blue ground. The upper and lower borders feature scrolls carrying explanatory texts. The title of the scene is written in French on a blue scroll in the center of the upper border: *Le IIIle*

*triu[m]phe de bon[n]e renom[m]ee* (The Fourth Triumph of Good Renown). French verses in the scroll to the left read: *La mort mord tout mais clere Renom[m]ee Sur mort triu[m]phe et la tient deprime[e] / Dessouds ses pieds Mais apres ses effors Fame suscite les haults fais des gens mors*; in the scroll to the right: *Qui par vertu ont meritee gloire Quapres leur mort de leurs fais soit memoire / Inclite fame neust jamais congnoisa[n]ce De letheus le grant lac doubliance*. In the middle of the lower border is a red scroll with a Latin text: *Omnia mors mordet s[ed] morte fama triol[m]phat Etera mord[en]te[m] sub pede fama permit / Egregiu[m] facin[us] post morte[m] suscit[at] ipsa Nec scit letheos inclitha fama lacus*. The French and Latin verses carry the same message: "Death strikes all, but bright Fame triumphs over Death and keeps it trampled underfoot; after her victory Fame proclaims the great deeds of the dead, so that the actions of those, who by their greatness have deserved glory, shall be remembered after their death. Renowned Fame has never known Lethe, the great lake of forgetfulness."<sup>5</sup>



Detail of cat. no. 13

#### *Date and Place of Manufacture*

The conception of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* series is generally dated to 1507 because this date is woven into the *Triumph of Chastity over Love* panel in a group of three *Triumphs* now at the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>6</sup> A second date, which has traditionally been read as 1510 but which may actually be 1520, is also woven into that tapestry and probably indicates the date of an alteration to the cartoon or the date of weaving of that particular set. The Victoria and Albert group also includes a weaving of the *Triumph of Fame over Death* (fig. 69). In this work, as in the Rijksmuseum's *Fame*, Caesar's tunic has double-headed eagles, whereas in another version (one of a group of four *Triumphs*) at Hampton Court, Caesar is dressed in a tunic without eagles.<sup>7</sup> Both the Victoria and Albert and the Rijksmuseum *Fames* also include a number of figures in the crowd that do not appear in the Hampton Court version (see below). However, the Victoria and Albert *Fame* does not have the mahout on the foremost elephant. Besides the addition of the mahout, the Rijksmuseum *Fame* differs from those at the Victoria and Albert and Hampton Court in the positions of the elephants and the tassels hanging from the cloth on the front elephant. The face of the flying Fame at the left of the Rijksmuseum's tapestry is in profile instead





Fig. 69. *The Triumph of Fame over Death* from the *Triumphs of Petrarch*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, ca. 1520 (?). Wool and silk, 439 x 821 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

of the three-quarters view on the Victoria and Albert panel. It follows that the Hampton Court pieces are from the earliest known weaving of this *Triumphs of Petrarch* series, and the Victoria and Albert's pieces are from a succeeding set woven from adapted cartoons, about 1520. The Rijksmuseum tapestry is from yet a later weaving, between about 1520 and about 1525, which incorporated further alterations in the cartoons. Since the borders on all these *Triumphs* are typical of those on tapestries woven in Brussels in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the *Triumphs* are all assumed to have been woven in that center.

The designer of the *Triumph of Fame over Death* tapestry should probably be sought among the anonymous circle of artists around Jan van Roome in Brussels.

#### Patron

Although we do not know who commissioned the design of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* series, we can glean information about the circles in which it may have been conceived from the

French and Latin verses in the scrolls. These were written at the French court at the end of the fifteenth century by Jean II Robertet, secretary of finance to Louis XI in 1470 and chamberlain to Charles VIII in 1492, to accompany a manuscript adaptation of Petrarch's *Trionfi*.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore possible that this tapestry series was developed in response to a commission by a member of the French court or by someone closely associated with it. A set of this design can certainly be identified in the inventory of the French royal collection taken in 1551.<sup>9</sup> The design subsequently enjoyed considerable popularity in English court circles in the 1510s. Thomas Ruthal, bishop of Durham, owned a six-piece set and two duplicate pieces, which Cardinal Wolsey acquired from Ruthal's estate in 1523. Wolsey also owned a second, very fine set of this design. Listed first in the inventory of his tapestries (ca. 1522–23), this had a border of the arms of England and Spain sewn to the top, which suggests that Wolsey may have received it as a perquisite from Henry VIII. Both sets subsequently passed into the collection of

Henry VIII at Wolsey's fall in 1529.<sup>10</sup> As noted above, four pieces survive today at Hampton Court in a somewhat worn and faded state, traditionally, but not certainly, identified as from Ruthal's set.

One of the most intriguing differences between the Hampton Court version of the *Triumph of Fame* and the weavings at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Rijksmuseum are the two additional portraits that appear in the center of the later versions of the composition. One of these depicts a cardinal, the other a wide-faced bearded man. The features of these two figures are close to contemporary portraits of Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII. In view of the evident interest in the Petrarchan theme in English court circles during the 1510s, Campbell has suggested that the cartoon for this design may have been customized for Henry or Wolsey during the late 1510s. It is even possible that the earlier of these later weavings, and its two companion pieces at the Victoria and Albert Museum, may derive from the high-quality set recorded in

Wolsey's collection (the armorial borders now removed).<sup>11</sup> The three *Triumphs* now at the Victoria and Albert Museum are first recorded in Genoa in 1658.<sup>12</sup> This would be consistent with a sale from the royal collection during the Commonwealth between 1649 and 1654.

Fragments from at least two other sets survive in the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle (with the arms of Philip of Cleves-Ravenstein, 1456–1528); the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; and various private collections.<sup>13</sup> According to tradition, the set of the *Triumphs* that included the Rijksmuseum *Triumph of Fame* is thought to have been in the possession of the counts of Mirepoix in the château of Malesherbes already in the sixteenth century. Until 1925 three other tapestries from this set—the *Triumph of Love* and fragments of the *Triumph of Time over Fame* and the *Triumph of Eternity over Time*—were also at Malesherbes; their present whereabouts are unknown.

HILLIE SMIT<sup>14</sup>

1. The fundamental study of the Petrarchan theme in the visual arts remains Essling and Müntz 1902.
2. Van Riet and Volckaert 1996, pp. 6–9.
3. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, ser. 5, no. 2, pp. 22, 24.
4. For examples, see Essling and Müntz 1902, pp. 126, 147, 173.
5. The English translation was taken from Wingfield Digby 1980, p. 37.
6. Ibid., p. 36, no. 22.
7. Marillier 1952, p. 18, pl. vii.
8. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, manuscript, no. 5066; see Delmarcel 1989.
9. Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, pp. 276 no. 59, 298, nos. xxvii, xxviii.
10. T. Campbell 1996a, pp. 102–3; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 151–52.
11. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 151–52.
12. Boccardo 1983–85, pp. 115–16; Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 50.
13. Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 36–38.
14. This is an adaptation of the author's entry for the forthcoming (2002) catalogue of the tapestry collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

## 14.

### *The Lamentation*

Designer unknown  
Probably woven in Brussels, ca. 1510  
Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
298 x 328 cm (9 ft. 9 in. x 10 ft. 9 in.)  
8–9 warps per cm  
Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (858)

PROVENANCE: 1861, acquired by the Musée Royal d'Antiquités, Brussels, from sale of goods of Mme van Antwerpen in Brussels.

REFERENCES: Pinchart 1865; Destrée 1902; Destrée 1904, pp. 10–13; Brussels 1906, pp. 27–29; Crick-Kuntziger 1927b; Crick-Kuntziger 1956b, pp. 37–38, no. 20 (with bibliog.); Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 180–82, no. 75; Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 73–74, 132–33, no. 17; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 67–69; Delmarcel in Brussels 2000, p. 106.

CONDITION: Lighter tones, particularly those woven in silk, are greatly faded. For example, Christ's blood, originally red, appears white. The blue, red, and green wools read clearly, in part because of extensive restoration during the 1970s. A distinctive orange thread in certain areas results from a historic restoration, while the dark thread around the figures has also been replaced in many areas. The tapestry is unusual because much of the modeling of the figures, particularly the areas of flesh, is emphasized by small stripes of color applied to the surface after completion of weaving, rather than woven as an integral part of the tapestry, as was more usual. It is uncertain whether this staining is original to the tapestry or whether it was undertaken during a later restoration.

Recognized as one of finest products of Netherlandish tapestry production since its acquisition by the Musée Royal d'Antiquités, Brussels, in 1861, the *Lamentation* provides an intriguing example of the manner in which the influence of Italian art first began to manifest itself in Northern tapestry design in the early sixteenth century. The central group of the Virgin with the dead Christ on her lap and Mary Magdalen and Saint John supporting his feet and head is copied, in reverse and with some variations, from a *Pietà* painted by the master Perugino for the monks of San Giusto alla Mura, Florence, between 1493 and 1497 (fig. 70).<sup>1</sup> Although the unidentified artist of the tapestry has retained the monumental arrangement of the central group, it has been subsumed within a composition that is entirely Netherlandish in character. The plain garments















Detail of cat. no. 14

worn by Perugino's figures have been replaced with robes of sumptuous fabrics, cut in fuller style and with elaborate decorative embroidery; in place of the austere architectural setting of Perugino's painting, the figures in the tapestry are surrounded by a crowd of richly costumed onlookers. The richness of the composition is further enhanced by subsidiary scenes of Christ's Descent into Hell, and the Entombment, which are depicted in the upper corners of the tapestry. Thus, the powerful central composition of Perugino's painting is appropriated for the strong visual formula and pathos that it provides, rather than for any more profound

awareness of, or interest in, the distinctive quattrocento style that it embodied.

#### Description

The tapestry comprises three narrative episodes, the Lamentation over the Dead Christ, the Descent into Hell, and the Entombment. Of these, the Lamentation occupies the main portion of the tapestry. This theme, which is not mentioned in the Scriptures, had developed in Byzantine art as an image of meditation on the Passion of Christ and the sufferings of Mary and had been popularized in Western art through the influence of texts such as the late

thirteenth-century *Meditationes vitae Christi* of Pseudo-Bonaventura.<sup>2</sup> The central foreground of the composition is dominated by Christ, shown full length, parallel to the picture plane, naked save for a cloth around his lower torso; the main weight of his body is supported by the Virgin, over whose lap he is stretched (the letters MARIA appear on the border of her cloak). Her left hand supports Christ's neck, while her right hand rests lightly on her upper chest, the fingers slightly parted on her neck cloth in a gesture of great tenderness. Christ's upper torso is supported by Saint John, who kneels to the Virgin's left, with Christ's head on

Detail of cat. no. 14



Fig. 70. *Pietà*, Perugino, 1493–97. Oil on panel, 177 x 168 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Fig. 71. *The Deposition*. Tapestry woven in Brussels, ca. 1505–10. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal wrapped thread, 210 x 206 cm. Museo del Duomo, Milan

his shoulder. In contrast to the other participants, most of whom are looking in the general direction of Christ, Saint John looks out at the audience, his solemn gaze drawing the viewer into the composition. Christ's lower legs rest on Mary Magdalen's lap, and her hands are clasped in prayer. A richly modeled perfume container stands before her. In the central foreground are the bone, skull, and jawbone of Adam—a traditional reminder of the original sin from which Christ's sacrifice redeemed mankind. Several of the small plants may also have a symbolic meaning.

The Virgin is flanked on either side by the kneeling figures of the three Marys who traditionally attended her at this moment of grief. Behind, two unidentified men complete the triangular composition of the central group, which, in turn, is flanked by two subsidiary groups. At the left, five men look on, of whom the foremost can be identified as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus on the basis of comparison between their costumes and those of the two men in the subsidiary Entombment scene at the upper right. Nicodemus holds a white cloth, embroidered with decorative motifs and letters of unidentified significance. At the right, a woman wipes tears from her eyes as another looks on meditatively. These woman are flanked by four

men dressed in sumptuous costumes of brocaded cloth of gold, moiré silk, and cut velvet, all of whom appear lost in reverie at this moving scene. The hem of the turban of the man immediately behind Saint John bears the inscription *PHILIP*. In the center of the upper part, the composition is dominated by a T-shaped cross, with the inscription *INRI* (Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews) at its center. A young man is descending a ladder that leans against the cross. He carries the crown of thorns in his left hand. Below him, on the left, a woman reaches toward the young man with a cloth to receive this precious relic. Behind her a group of men is visible in the middle distance. The man holding a purse may be a representation of Judas, the disciple who betrayed Christ. In combination with the flanking groups in the foreground, these upper elements echo and frame the triangular structure of the main central group.

The upper left corner depicts Christ's Descent into Hell, a subject that is not described in the Scriptures but derives from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus and gained widespread attention during the Middle Ages through the *Golden Legend*. Christ, clothed in a robe and holding a cross, the symbol of his sacrifice, stands on the wooden door that he has just torn

down, raising his hand in blessing over the naked figures of Adam and Eve who are emerging from the mouth of hell. A devil is visible in the darkness behind the figures. This scene is balanced in the upper right corner by a representation of the Entombment, an event described by all the Gospels (Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–55; John 19:38–42). Christ, loosely wrapped in a white cloth with a pattern brocaded in gold at the hem, is being lowered into the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea (at his head) and Nicodemus (at his feet). The tapestry is framed by an elaborate border featuring roses, presumably symbolic of the Passion, and various types of birds which have been identified as nightingales, titmice, and goldfinches. In the center of the lower border a falcon is killing a small bird.

On the strength of the scenes in the upper corners, Souchal suggested that this was probably part of a narrative series rather than a solitary panel.<sup>3</sup> Although this may be the case, other single, high-quality panels with similar compositions survive from the early sixteenth century, and, as contemporary inventories record subjects of comparable size, it seems reasonable to suppose that it may have been intended as a single devotional panel.<sup>4</sup>



### Visual Sources and Design

Destrée was the first to note that the central composition was copied from Perugino's *Pietà* (fig. 70).<sup>5</sup> As noted above, the figures of Christ, Mary Magdalen, and position of Saint John are direct copies, but the plain Renaissance tunics and cloaks in the painting are replaced in the tapestry by sumptuous robes. The Virgin's pose has also been altered: in the painting she holds Christ firmly, but in the tapestry she prays and he seems to hover over her lap. The flanking figures and architecture of Perugino's painting have also been replaced by a crowd of richly costumed onlookers.

The circumstances in which the painting originated are unknown, but on stylistic grounds it is generally dated between 1493 and 1497. From Vasari we know that it hung in the chapel of the convent of San Giusto alla Mura, in Florence. This community prepared and sold pigments to painters, which suggested to Delmarcel that the picture may have been seen by a Netherlandish painter buying pigment, who then made a copy.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, the design may have been transported to the Netherlands through the medium of a now-lost engraving or through a workshop copy.

If the central composition is largely drawn from Perugino's painting, those of the Descent into Hell and the Entombment are closely related to models that were current in the Brussels tapestry industry. An especially close comparison is provided by the subsidiary scenes of a *Deposition* that was part of a *Passion* series, of which the earliest extant weaving is in the Spanish royal collection (fig. 55).<sup>7</sup> One tapestry of that set carries the date 1507, but it is not known whether this is the date of the cartoon or the weaving. As comparison reveals, the subsidiary scenes in the Brussels *Lamentation* tapestry are closely related to those in this earlier model, although the artist of the later design has altered the perspective and elaborated the figures in the Entombment. In addition, the pathos of the scene has been heightened by the way in which Christ's head is shown slumped toward his shoulder, with his arm hanging loosely at his side, a pose that ultimately derives from the Rogier van der Weyden *Deposition* (Prado, Madrid). The same Christ figure appears in a small tapestry of the *Lamentation*, possibly by the same cartoonist (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).<sup>8</sup> The

composition of the Descent into Hell ultimately derives from a Martin Schongauer print of about 1480, but the motif had entered a common repertory of Netherlandish tapestry design and had been reproduced in various tapestries of the early sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The designer and cartoonist of the *Lamentation* tapestry are unknown, but the inscription PHILIP on one of the figures has generated an enormous amount of fruitless and probably misplaced debate. Much of this discussion has taken its point of departure from the document relating to the design of a *Miraculous Communion of Herkinbald* tapestry (fig. 60) by a Meester Jan van Brussel (probably Jan van Roome) in 1513, for the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of Louvain, and the execution of the cartoon by a certain "Philips den Schilder." Following this model, Pinchart attributed the design to Bernaert van Orley and the cartoon to this same Master Philip, who, he suggested, may have been one and the same with a Philippe de Mol who was prosecuted in 1527 with van Orley and other artists for their religious practices.<sup>10</sup> Taking an alternative tack, Wauters attributed the design to Jan van Roome and suggested that the inscription reflected the involvement of van Orley's brother Philip as the cartoonist.<sup>11</sup> In a series of publications that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century Destrée followed these and a variety of other spurious theories, with little substantive result.<sup>12</sup> Writing in 1927, Crick-Kuntziger introduced a note of common sense into this art-historical game of pin the tail on the donkey, correctly rejecting any close stylistic link between the *Lamentation* and *Herkinbald* designs on which previous writers had placed so much emphasis.<sup>13</sup>

This did not prevent Ackerman from weaving a further unhelpful element into the debate in what she trumpeted as the solution of the Master Philip issue in 1931. She returned to the identification of the cartoonist as Philippe de Mol on the basis of what she considered to be his signature on one of a set of *Triumphs of Petrarch* tapestries.<sup>14</sup> While it is possible that the designer-cartoonist team of this series may also have been responsible for the *Lamentation*, the purported signature is wholly spurious. Crick-Kuntziger reiterated her commonsense position in the catalogue of the tapestries at the Musées Royaux, Brussels, published in 1956.<sup>15</sup> As Souchal has also noted, the assump-

tion that the name was that of the designer or cartoonist is by no means certain—it may refer to a weaver or merchant, like the AELST inscription on the *Saint Gregory, Passion, and Story of David* sets discussed above (pp. 133, 149).<sup>16</sup>

Following an idea first raised by Destrée, Delmarcel has reiterated the possibility that the inscription may designate the apostle Philip, perhaps the patron saint of the unknown person who commissioned the design, or even of the unknown weaver.<sup>17</sup> The present writer considers that this is unlikely because Christ was abandoned by all the apostles except for John following his arrest, and it seems improbable that an early sixteenth-century patron would have distorted the sources to this extent in a devotional image. In the absence of further evidence, speculation as to whether the name refers to the designer or the merchant also seems fruitless.

For the time being a more useful line of research must be the investigation of the close stylistic links between this design and those of various other high-quality early sixteenth-century tapestries of which a *Crucifixion* (Forlì) and a *Deposition* (fig. 71), both dating from about 1505–10, are the most closely linked.<sup>18</sup> Delmarcel has also linked the design to a number of other high-quality early sixteenth-century tapestries, including the "standing-figure" *Triumphs of Petrarch* series (Metropolitan Museum, New York; Louvre, Paris; Musée des Tissus, Lyon), a *Justice of Trajan* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), and a scene of *Emperor Vespasian Cured by Veronica's Veil* (Lehman Collection, Metropolitan Museum). As Delmarcel has commented, the gentle expression, postures, and costumes of the figures in these tapestries are reminiscent of those in the work of Quentin Massys.<sup>19</sup> No documentary evidence of Massys's involvement with the tapestry industry has yet emerged and this influence may reflect a designer-cartoonist team working under his influence. Equally, a woven copy of at least one Massys painting has survived (*Ecce Homo*; Metropolitan Museum, New York)—albeit of a character very different from the design in question—which suggests that his workshop did have links with the tapestry industry.<sup>20</sup>

Although recent tapestry historians have, quite correctly, rejected the unquestioning attribution of the vast majority of the "pre-Renaissance" designs to Jan van Roome and the handful of other artists whom contemporary documents link to the tapestry industry, the pivotal role

played by relatively few master painters in relation to high-quality Brussels production during the 1530s, 1540s, and 1550s (as opposed to lower-quality production in which the style of these artists was repeated in a diluted form) does suggest that high-quality production may also have been dominated by relatively few workshops in an earlier period. The close links between the Brussels *Lamentation* and the aforementioned tapestries certainly invite such consideration. It should also be noted that this question is made far more complex by the way that cartoonists in the first quarter of the sixteenth century frequently reworked older compositions (many deriving from models that originated with Rogier van der Weyden), incorporated new figures and portraits into older cartoons, derived certain poses from pattern books or other cartoons, and adapted “staffage” figures from one design to another. For example, in this case, the head and shoulders of the woman drying her eyes in the right foreground appear, with a different costume, in the right foreground of the Milan *Deposition* (fig. 71). In turn, the figure of Saint John rushing in from the left in the Milan *Deposition*, appears again, with a slightly modified costume, in a *Crucifixion* formerly in the Blumenthal collection (Metropolitan Museum). Careful examination of the Brussels *Lamentation* reveals that several of the subsidiary figures have an air of distraction, or a gaze directed away from the main focus of the scene, suggesting that they too may have been adapted from different compositions.

Although the reuse of cartoon and pattern-book elements greatly confuses the question, the close stylistic and technical similarities between tapestries such as the Blumenthal *Crucifixion*, the Brussels *Lamentation*, and the Milan *Deposition* suggest that a more nuanced analysis of the links and correspondence between these and other contemporary high-quality Brussels tapestries holds the key to a better understanding of how and why the Brussels *Lamentation* was conceived, and to the identity of the designer and cartoonists.

#### Patron

Nothing is known of the circumstances in which this tapestry was made or of its provenance before its purchase from the estate of Mme van Antwerpen in 1861, but in its first publication Pinchart suggested that the character of

several of the faces in the tapestry indicated that they may be portraits.<sup>21</sup> The physiognomy of the man with clasped hands in the left foreground is especially distinctive, and the probability that this may be a portrait of the original patron gains credence from Forti Grazzini's identification of an equally distinctive figure, standing in a similar position and pose in the aforementioned *Deposition* tapestry (fig. 71), as a portrait of Cardinal Georges I d'Amboise, a keen tapestry patron and governor of Milan from 1500. If this is correct, his death in 1510 provides a terminus ante quem for that design.<sup>22</sup> Stylistically, the *Deposition* tapestry is so closely related to the Brussels *Lamentation* that they can confidently be attributed to the same artist and cartoonist team, so it seems reasonable to suppose that the distinctive figure in the left foreground of the latter may also be a portrait of the patron. As Delmarcel has noted in an unpublished note in the curatorial files associated with the Brussels *Lamentation*, the close stylistic link between these two tapestries raises the possibility that the *Lamentation* was also commissioned by a member of the d'Amboise family, and there is, indeed, a strong resemblance between the putative portrait in the *Lamentation* and portraits of Georges's nephew Charles II Chaumont d'Amboise (1473–1511), who appears to have had a similarly thin face and aquiline nose.<sup>23</sup> Charles is known to have acted as an artistic agent for both the French king and his uncles and was responsible for the relocation of Andrea Solario to Gaillon in 1507. He may also have been responsible for commissioning the designs of the *Life of Christ and the Virgin* tapestries woven for his uncle Jacques d'Amboise (cat. no. 15). Considering the known interest of these patrons in the tapestry medium, this identification is certainly plausible, but it requires further investigation.

#### Place of Manufacture

The very high quality of the *Lamentation* tapestry and its probable dating to about 1510 has led to a general consensus that it is a Brussels product. Although this long-held assumption is unsupported by documentation, the consistency of style and technique between this panel and tapestries that are definitely identified as Brussels products by documentation or, from 1528, weavers' marks, ensures that this attribution is relatively secure.

One technical issue that has not yet been fully investigated is the fact that much of the modeling of the robes and flesh is articulated with small hachures that are not woven into the tapestry, as was normal, but which have been added to its surface in some kind of stain or ink. This has led to the suggestion that we may have a rare example of the work of the *afzetters*, painters who touched up tapestries following their completion.<sup>24</sup> Although no documented example of this practice survives, it appears to have become fairly extensive during the 1530s—presumably in response to the commercial pressures that the Brussels industry was experiencing to produce large volumes of high-quality, pictorial tapestries. The practice was so widespread that Mary of Hungary introduced legislation to ensure that it was not substituted for detailed weaving (see pp. 282–83). Whether the *Lamentation* tapestry provides a rare example of the *afzetters*' work remains in question. Considering the very high quality of the tapestry it seems somewhat unlikely that it would have been completed in this way, and the tapestry also predates the period in which the practice is known to have become widespread. It is therefore also possible that the current example of the practice derives from a very careful “restoration” made during the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

1. Uffizi, Florence, no. 8365; Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, p. 133, no. 31; Gregori 1994, p. 131; Garibaldi 1999, pp. 107–8, 158, no. 19.
2. Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, p. 73.
3. Souchal in Paris 1973, p. 182.
4. See Castelnovo 1990 for examples.
5. Destrée 1902, pp. 17–20.
6. Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 132–33.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
8. Castelnovo 1990, p. 243.
9. M. Lupo in *ibid.*, pp. 239–40, 246–47.
10. Pinchart 1865, pp. 330, 334.
11. Wauters 1881, pp. 13–15.
12. Destrée 1904, pp. 8, 20.
13. Crick-Kuntziger 1927b, pp. 6, 8, 18.
14. Ackerman 1931.
15. Crick-Kuntziger 1956b, pp. 37–38.
16. Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 180–82.
17. Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, p. 74; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 69.
18. Forti Grazzini 1990a, pp. 44, 250.
19. Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, p. 74; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 69.
20. De Bosque 1975, pp. 256–59; Standen 1985, vol. 1, pp. 79–82.
21. Pinchart 1865, p. 329.
22. Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 76–77 n. 21; Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 44.
23. Paris 1985, pp. 47–49, esp. nos. 23, 27.
24. Verbal communication from G. Delmarcel, December 2000.



## 15.

*The Death, Burial, and Assumption of the Virgin*

From a set of the *Life of Christ and the Virgin* (previously known as the *Life of the Virgin*)

Designer unknown

Woven in the Netherlands, possibly Tournai, between 1505 and 1516

Wool and silk

159 x 611 cm (5 ft. 2 1/4 in. x 20 ft. 1/2 in.)

6–7 warps per cm

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (T 15617)

**PROVENANCE:** Probably to be identified with choir tapestries recorded at Clermont Cathedral in 1839; 1884, Hermitage acquired two pieces of the set from the Basilewsky collection; 1887, Hermitage acquired two other pieces in the set, including cat. no. 15, which belonged to Prince Gagarin.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Darcel and Basilewsky 1874, pp. 120, 187, no. 54; Guichard and Darcel 1881, vol. 1, pls. 3, 4; Saint Petersburg 1956, p. 179; Biriukova 1965, pp. 20–22, pls. 26–43; Biriukova 1974, nos. 2–5; Souchal 1976.

**CONDITION:** Tapestry extremely abraded, with many exposed warps and overall damage, but main elements of design are clearly legible. Although the colors are faded, the tapestry was woven predominantly in wool, which has ensured that the lighter spectrum—including the yellows, greens, and lilacs—are still evident. The tapestry was cleaned and conserved prior to the exhibition in 2002, at which time areas of loss were camouflaged with patches overlaid with new warps and spaced couching threads.

This tapestry is the last in a group of four traditionally considered to derive from a set of the *Life of the Virgin*. All carry the arms of the noted French humanist and patron Jacques d'Amboise, bishop of Clermont. Each is divided into three separate narrative sections by trompe l'oeil architectural pillars. Although this division was a standard device in choir tapestries from the 1480s, the extent to which the artist has attempted to represent each episode as a fully realized illusionistic scene of a single moment in time is in marked contrast to the style of contemporary Netherlandish tapestry design. The rigorous perspectival uniformity combined with the style in which the figures are depicted and the character of the decorative detailing on the architecture points to the conception of the design by an Italian artist from the Lombard region in the first decade of the sixteenth century.

Along with the more ambitious Trivulzio Months (see cat. no. 11), this design anticipates the illusionistic and perspectival aesthetic that Raphael was to introduce into tapestry design with the *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons in 1515.

*Description*

The previous tapestries in the set depict events prior to and following the Birth of Christ. The first illustrates the Meeting of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, the Birth of Mary, and the Presentation in the Temple; the second, the Betrothal of Mary and Joseph, the Annunciation, and the Visitation; and the third, the Adoration of the Magi and the Adoration of the Shepherds.<sup>2</sup> Here, in the fourth and final piece of this group, and presumably of the original set, we see the Death, Burial, and Assumption of the Virgin.

As in the previous tapestries, the scenes are separated by hexagonal plinths and columns *all'antica* that are decorated in relief with grotesques and putti. These form the central element of a trompe l'oeil architectural frame that provides the upper and lower borders of the tapestry. The scene at the left depicts the death of the Virgin in terms of a traditional *Dormitio Virginis*, in which the Virgin's soul is taken by Christ as the Office of the Dead is performed over her corpse. She lies on a stone bier in the foreground of a large interior, in late-quattrocento style, with pilasters, a coffered ceiling, and an inlaid marble floor. The bier is carved on the side with a frieze of putti holding blank escutcheons and, in the center, the letter I (for Jacques). Saint John leans over the Virgin's head as he places a palm in her left hand; a second figure (Saint Peter?), who wears ecclesiastical robes, places a symbolic extinguished candle in her right hand. Other apostles stand to the right; one of them swings a thurible while another carries a cross with an image of the crucified Christ. Two other figures kneel or sit in the immediate foreground, one staring upward in grief as the other, who holds a staff and a rosary, leans forward to console him. Above, Christ is seated on a throne that rises out of a small cloud. He leans forward to receive the spirit of the Virgin in his right hand.

The second, central scene shows the apostles carrying the coffin of the Virgin to its burial site. A procession is led by the man wearing a red skull cap; he again carries the cross, as he did in the preceding panel. In the center, four apostles are supporting the Virgin's coffin, while others carry a canopy and lighted torches. At the back a crowd of soldiers is visible, with a deep landscape beyond and a town in the far distance. The bearers, who include the kneeling figure in the foreground of the preceding scene, carry the coffin, which is covered with a rich cloth of gold or brocade velvet, and there are sheets slung beneath it. Armor-clad soldiers lie in the foreground, and three of their amputated hands grip the cloth. They signify the profane witnesses who tried to stop the burial as described in apocryphal medieval texts such as Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*.

In the final scene, far right, the Virgin is shown seated on a throne at the moment of her coronation. She is surrounded by figures from the Old and New Testaments, including, at the left, Moses (holding the tablets), David (with a harp), and on the right, Noah (with grapes), Saint John, and Adam and Eve. God is shown as three identical figures (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Above, angels support a canopy over the Virgin's throne with the inscription REGINA CELI · LETARE (Queen of Heaven, Rejoice), while an angelic orchestra and choir play and sing on either side. The immediate foreground of the scene is occupied by a ring of winged angels who hover with their backs to the viewer, just behind a string of beads, adorned at intervals with the shell insignia of Saint James and supported in the center by an armorial escutcheon and bishop's crosier.

*Patron and Intended Location*

Biriukova identified the coat of arms that appears on the tapestries as that of the French d'Amboise family (la crosse en pal) combined with the emblems of Saint James. This combination suggests that they were made for Jacques d'Amboise (d. 1516), bishop of Clermont. The same shell motif, along with Jacques's initials, appeared on a heraldic tapestry (now lost)



that is recorded in a drawing in the collection of Gaignières, an eighteenth-century antiquary.<sup>3</sup>

Jacques was the seventh son of Pierre II Chaumont d'Amboise (d. 1473), who, as counsellor to Charles VII and Louis XI and governor of Touraine, was well placed to promote the fortunes of his extended family (he eventually had sixteen children). Several of Jacques's brothers were major artistic patrons, and collectively they played an important role in promoting Italian tastes within France. Charles I (d. 1503), the eldest, was responsible for rebuilding the family château of Chaumont, which had been destroyed by Louis XI in 1465, while Pierre, the sixth son and bishop of Poitiers, completed the abbey of Jouin and the cathedral of Poitiers. The eighth son, Georges I d'Amboise (1460–1510), was the most influential of all. He became bishop of Montauban (1484), archbishop of Narbonne (1492) and Rouen (1494), cardinal and prime minister of Louis XII (1498), governor of Milan (1500), and papal legate (1501). Following his return from Italy in 1502 Georges was responsible for substantial extensions to the

episcopal palace at Rouen and, from 1506, at Gaillon by both French and Italian artists.<sup>4</sup>

With these filial examples, it is hardly surprising that Jacques was also an important patron of the arts. As abbot of Cluny (1485) he was responsible for constructing the Parisian residence of the abbots of Cluny (1485–97), now familiar to many as the Musée de Cluny (Musée National du Moyen-Âge), and during his tenure he made his first major tapestry commission, a set of choir tapestries depicting the lives of its four sanctified abbots.<sup>5</sup> Appointed bishop of Clermont in 1505, Jacques made substantial additions to the cathedral, including colossal statues of Saint Michael and a Tree of Jesse surmounted by a statue of the Virgin for its roof (1512), stained-glass windows (possibly from designs from the same workshop as the *Hunt of the Unicorn* tapestries; see cat. no. 5), and choir stalls from the sculptor Gilbert Chapard.<sup>6</sup>

As Souchal first noted, the *Life of Christ* and the *Virgin* tapestries were almost certainly also commissioned as a gift for Clermont Cathedral. This assumption is based on the description in

an antiquarian account, which records a set of tapestries there of the *Life of Christ*, "in which all the colors have a clarity that is immensely pleasing."<sup>7</sup> Souchal postulated that since the scenes of Christ's infancy were common to both the *Life of Christ* and the *Life of the Virgin*, it was reasonable to conjecture that the Hermitage tapestries correspond to this documented set. She also noted that in its original form the Hermitage set probably included more sections than now survive, because the combined length of the known pieces is approximately 22 meters, while the antiquarian account stated that the tapestries hung in the choir on feast days and covered "all around the choir, in the space between the stalls and the cornice so that the beauty of the choir corresponds to the solemnity of the holy day."<sup>8</sup> Souchal noted that the missing scenes may have included a more extensive treatment of the *Life of Christ*.<sup>9</sup> Support for this hypothesis is provided by a single scene of *Christ Carrying the Cross on the Road to Calvary* bordered by the same trompe l'oeil architectural frame and bearing the same





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coat of arms that Forti Grazzini has recently identified as belonging to a lost fragment from this set (current location unknown).<sup>10</sup> The survival of this scene suggests that the original set would also have included other scenes from the Passion and should be considered as a Life of Christ and the Virgin.

#### Design and Cartoons

As noted above, the manner in which the design is conceived, with realistic scenes set within a trompe l'oeil frame, was novel in tapestry design. Although architectural divisions became the standard manner in which narrative choir tapestries were articulated, starting in the late fifteenth century (as for example in the *Life of the Virgin*, commissioned for Beaune by Hughes III Le Coq in 1505), the dominant style of design remained very traditional in character, with an emphasis on narrative details and decorative surface pattern (for example, in the costumes and the millefleurs grounds).<sup>11</sup> In contrast, the narrative episodes of the Hermitage *Life of Christ and the Virgin* are each conceived as if they

are taking place in a space which is immediately adjacent to the spectator. The handling of the perspective and the placement of the figures within the settings are handled in a highly accomplished manner. Each scene is composed so that the vanishing point is slightly below the head level of the standing figures. A viewer is thus made to feel that he or she is standing just outside the immediate foreground of the scene, an intimate witness to the proceedings. The steep foreshortening of the foreground figures in each scene heightens this sense of physical immediacy. With the exception of the more ambitious Trivulzio *Months* designed by Bramantino in the early 1500s, which it probably postdated by a few years, the Hermitage *Life of Christ and the Virgin* is the earliest known application of such Italian concepts to a narrative tapestry series.

From its first publication in the late nineteenth century, commentators have recognized the Italian character of the design. Darcel and Basilewsky commented on the strong affinity with the work of Andrea Mantegna, while more recently Souchal noted the similarities

between the composition and figures in the scene of the *Betrothal of Joseph and Mary* with those in the Raphael painting of this subject executed in 1504 for the Albizzini chapel in San Francesco, Città di Castello (Brera, Milan). More generally, Forti Grazzini has suggested that the design was produced by an artist familiar with the work of Mantegna, Bramantino, and the Master of the Windmill.<sup>12</sup>

The influence of Mantegna is especially marked in the scene of the *Death of the Virgin*, as can be seen by comparison with Mantegna's painting of this subject now in the Prado and the *Christ with the Soul of the Virgin* that was originally attached to the top of it (formerly Baldi collection, Ferrara).<sup>13</sup> Quite apart from the shared subject, the scene is set in a similar architectural setting and composed in a very similar fashion, with the Virgin also arranged parallel to the picture plane, and the attendant apostles, one of whom swings a thurible, costumed in similar robes. The apostle who is reading the Office of the Dead even has the same features and hairstyle as the figure placing the candle in





Detail of cat. no. 15

the Virgin's hand in the tapestry. (While these elements do not necessarily imply the direct involvement of Mantegna in the conception of the design, they certainly suggest an artist who was familiar with his work.) Whether the artist was from Lombardy or a French artist who had been fully exposed to Italian influence remains to be established. Souchal assumed that the cartoons were prepared by a Northern artist, because of what she perceived to be stylistic similarities between the landscapes and those in other extant choir tapestries of the period.<sup>14</sup> If this is correct, the complex nature of the perspectival interiors, the reliefs with which they are

decorated, and the distinctive "dry" folds in the garments of many of the figures (rather than the more fluid folds characteristic of Netherlandish cartoon design) suggest that the preliminary designs must have been very detailed.

As Souchal wrote, the combination of these stylistic factors may well reflect the influence on Jacques d'Amboise of the tastes of his brother Georges, whose appetite for Italian art is well documented, most notably in the striking decorations undertaken at the Gaillon château from 1506.<sup>15</sup> Georges considered Mantegna to be the leading painter in the world and communicated his desire to obtain one of his works to Isabella

d'Este in 1499. Unable to wrest the artist from the Gonzaga court, he had to be satisfied with a few works by the painter, including his portrait, and the reproduction of his most famous work, the *Triumphs of Caesar*, in the form of a frieze in the gallery at Gaillon. Georges also acquired paintings by other Italian artists, including a Perugino and a *Bacchus* by Leonardo da Vinci. Andrea Solario, Leonardo's pupil, worked between 1507 and 1509–10 at Gaillon, where he painted a fresco representing the whole d'Amboise family as well as various other works.<sup>16</sup>

Considering the active interest that Georges took in Italian art, Souchal has suggested that



Jacques may have obtained the design for the *Life of Christ and the Virgin* tapestries from one of the artists working for his brother at Gaillon, or through the help of his nephew Charles II Chaumont d'Amboise (d. 1511), grand master of the king's horse in 1499, lieutenant general of the duchy of Milan, marshal of France in 1504, admiral in 1508. Charles acted as an agent for his uncles and other important French patrons. He was responsible for commissioning Leonardo da Vinci for designs for the solemn entries of Louis XII at Milan in May 1507 and July 1509, and for various paintings for the king, including the *Virgin of the Rocks* (Louvre, Paris). In view of this documented activity, it is quite possible that it was Charles who arranged for the design of the series.<sup>17</sup>

The discovery that the Hermitage tapestries were originally part of a set that had more than four pieces raises a third possibility. As noted above, Georges I d'Amboise was a keen tapestry patron. He made documented purchases from Antoine Grenier in 1497 and 1508 (the latter for three chambers of tapestry); he appears to have been portrayed in the fine-quality Brussels *Deposition*, now in Milan (see fig. 71); and the inventories taken in 1508 and 1550 list a substantial number of tapestries at Gaillon and Rouen.<sup>18</sup> In light of these facts, it is especially interesting to note that the 1550 inventory of Gaillon lists eight cartoons that were said to have been made for a set of tapestries that Georges donated to Rouen Cathedral (now lost). As we have seen, it was normal for cartoons to remain the property of the merchant, so the fact that Georges had chosen to retain them suggests that he valued them as works of art in their own right. The subject of the set is unknown, but on the basis of common practice of the time, Steppe and Delmarcel have suggested that Georges's cartoons may have been a set of the *Life of the Virgin* (or, we might add, a *Life of Christ and the*

*Virgin*).<sup>19</sup> If this was the case, it is tempting to suspect that the cartoons for the Hermitage tapestries were one and the same with those commissioned by Georges for his own set of this subject, which he subsequently lent to his brother Jacques. While this suggestion can only be conjectural, the character of the Hermitage set would fit in with what we know of Georges d'Amboise's love of Mantegna's work.

#### *Place and Date of Manufacture*

Although the character of the design is Italian, the materials and technique used in the tapestries have led previous commentators to assume that they were woven in northern Europe. Writing at a time when tapestry historians believed tapestry production to have been widespread in France during the early sixteenth century, Biriukova attributed the production to a French manufactory, while Souchal suggested Tournai (which was technically still French at the time of their execution).<sup>20</sup> Circumstantial support for the possibility that they may have been woven in a Tournai workshop is provided by evidence that Georges d'Amboise purchased a tapestry depicting the *Adoration of the Shepherds* from Antoine Grenier in 1497 for his episcopal palace in Rouen. Subsequently Grenier sold him three chambers of tapestries for Gaillon in 1508, and the inventories of the tapestries at Gaillon and Rouen in 1508 and 1550 include a number of tapestries whose subjects appear among lists of designs that the Greniers and other Tournai merchants are known to have traded, including a set of "la carvane"—probably the series depicting a caravan of European explorers in the West Indies—and the allegorical *Story of Banquet and Souper*.<sup>21</sup> Considering the documented interaction between Georges and the Grenier family, it is logical to suppose that Jacques's set of the *Life of Christ and the Virgin* may also have been executed in these workshops;

the color of the thread in the Hermitage tapestries is similar to that in a number of other tapestries traditionally attributed to Tournai. Equally, the style in which the volume of the figures is modeled, with long pronounced hachures of color, is unusual and requires further investigation.

The date at which the set was woven is unknown, but Jacques's appointment as bishop of Clermont in 1505 and his death in 1516 provide a terminus ante and post quem. In view of the evidence of other work that Jacques funded at Clermont it seems reasonable to conjecture that the tapestries may have been commissioned between 1506 and 1512.

1. Biriukova 1965, p. 20; Souchal 1976, p. 574, no. 219.

2. Biriukova 1965, pls. 26–43.

3. Ibid., pp. 20–22; Souchal 1976, pp. 576–77.

4. Souchal 1976, pp. 587–88, 592–95.

5. Ibid., p. 571.

6. Ibid., pp. 567–77.

7. "[D]on't les couleurs ont un éclat qui plaît infiniment." Douët d'Arcq 1853, p. 162; Souchal 1976, p. 574.

8. "[T]out le tour du chœur dans l'espace qui est entre le haut des stales et la corniche car la beauté du chœur devoit répondre à la solennité de l'Office." Souchal 1976, p. 574.

9. Ibid., p. 574, n. 219.

10. J. Boccara 1988, p. 132; Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 70, no. 167.

11. Erlande-Brandenburg 1976.

12. Darcel and Basilewsky 1874, p. 120, no. 544, and cat. no. 187; Souchal 1976, pp. 574–75; Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 70, no. 167.

13. Garavaglia 1967, pp. 97–98, no. 34, pls. 31, 32.

14. Souchal 1976, p. 575.

15. Ibid., pp. 578–88.

16. Ibid., p. 580; Paris 1985, pp. 45–47, 55–58, 62–64.

17. Souchal 1976, pp. 593–95.

18. Soil 1892, pp. 247, 250; Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 76–77, n. 21.

19. Steppe and Delmarcel 1974, p. 42.

20. Biriukova 1965, p. 21; Souchal 1976, p. 575.

21. Soil 1892, pp. 36, 247, 250, 316; Deville 1851, pp. 544–47.



16.

## *The Statue of the Virgin Arrives in Brussels*

From a four-piece set of the *Legend of Notre Dame du Sablon*

Design attributed to Bernaert van Orley,

ca. 1516–17

Probably woven in Brussels, workshop unknown,

ca. 1518

Wool and silk

341 x 528 cm (11 ft. 2½ in. x 17 ft. 3¾ in.)

6–7 warps per cm

Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (3153)

**PROVENANCE:** 1549, recorded in church of Sablon by Calvete de Estrella in his chronicle of the voyage of Prince Philip (later Philip II) to the Low Countries; 17th century, possibly recorded in the Brussels residence of the Taxis family; 1874, reappeared in the collection of E. Peyre, Paris; subsequently acquired by Frédéric Spitzer, who cut the first and third tapestry into three sections; June 16, 1893, sold at Spitzer collection sale; acquired by the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Spitzer 1890, vol. 1, pp. 158–61, 165–68, nos. 10–17; Crick-Kuntziger 1930; Crick-Kuntziger 1930a; Le Maire 1935; Crick-Kuntziger 1942; Le Maire 1954; Le Maire 1955; Crick-Kuntziger 1956b; d'Hulst 1960, pp. 140–46; Souchal in Paris 1973, nos. 85, 86, pp. 200–207; Souchal in New York 1974, nos. 90, 91, pp. 201–8; A. Van Ruymbeke in Brussels 1976, nos. 20–23, pp. 85–99 (with bibliog.); Farmer 1981, pp. 304–8; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 36–39; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 84, 119.

**CONDITION:** Good, considering age. All areas of cream/tan ground are new weaving, replacing lost silk. Much of the darker thread in the cloaks has also been replaced.

Commissioned by Franz von Taxis (François de Taxis) (1459–1517), imperial postmaster and a leading figure at Margaret of Austria's court, the unique set of the *Legend of Notre Dame du Sablon* was probably intended for the church of Notre-Dame du Sablon, in which a funerary chapel for the Taxis family was constructed in the early 1520s and where the set was certainly recorded in 1549. Ostensibly a narrative of the legend associated with the famous sculpture of the Virgin housed by this church, the set embodies a glorification of both the patron and his Habsburg benefactors—all represented by lifelike portraits.

Ever since it first came to public attention in the late nineteenth century, the set has been widely recognized as a seminal product of the







**V** aut ego diuoto cultu venerari etiam  
haec fecit meritis prius digna nos

**AVF REGINA LEONOR**

**S**anctus spiritus in te habitavit  
et tuam sanctitatem in te  
et tuam sanctitatem in te  
et tuam sanctitatem in te

**Gregorius**  
sanctus spiritus  
in te habitavit  
et tuam sanctitatem  
in te et tuam  
sanctitatem in te  
et tuam sanctitatem  
in te

**ta phereas dices sumum matris patris  
etis ad optatu digne eterna locum**

**T**isalia in sancto multum parous sanctus  
et despecta frequens amio vota fecit







early sixteenth-century Netherlandish tapestry industry. Apart from the iconographic interest of this exercise in patrician self-glorification, the design is of particular significance because it is the first that can be attributed to Bernaert van Orley, the Habsburg court artist who was to play such an influential role in the subsequent development of Netherlandish tapestry. Although it retains many features from the Northern design tradition—multiple narrative, the division of scenes by architectural elements, and sumptuous costumes—these are combined with devices that had been familiar in Italian art for several decades but had not previously manifested themselves in Netherlandish tapestry design (or extensively in Netherlandish painting)—notably, the attempt to present rounded figures in realistic perspectival space.

The stimulus to this innovative set, probably designed in late 1516 or early 1517, and woven before the end of 1518, is generally assumed to have been the Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons, which were sent from Rome to Brussels in the course of 1516–17. In fact, the cautious way in which perspectival interiors are combined with more traditional architectural framing devices (albeit, represented with a veneer of Renaissance ornament) suggests that the overall structure of the series must have been conceived before van Orley had assimilated the influence of the Raphael cartoons, perhaps even before he had seen them. Nevertheless, the design unquestionably represents the early development of van Orley's singular and experimental approach to tapestry design, and with it, the initiation of a new approach to the narrative and pictorial potential of the tapestry medium.

#### Description

The tapestry is the fourth and last in a set that depicts the miraculous circumstances in which a statue of the Virgin and child, known as *Our Lady with the Flowering Branch*, is supposed to have arrived at the church of Notre-Dame du Sablon (Our Lady of the Sands) in Brussels in 1348. According to the account of Johannes Gielemans (d. 1478), the earliest known source for this legend, the statue was originally located in an Antwerp church and was in poor condition. One night, the Virgin appeared to Beatrice Soetkens, a pious spinster responsible for maintaining the altar, and instructed her to

have the statue repainted and regilded, which, having obtained permission from the town magistrates, she did (these events were depicted in the first tapestry, now dismembered and dispersed).<sup>2</sup> Sometime later, the Virgin appeared again to Beatrice, instructing her to take the statue from the church and place it in the chapel of the Guild of Crossbowmen in the church of Sablon in Brussels. When Beatrice's formal request for transfer was refused, the Virgin appeared again, telling her to ignore the authorities and promising divine aid in the endeavor (events depicted in the second tapestry, fig. 127).<sup>3</sup> Following this injunction, Beatrice stole the statue, her flight aided by the temporary paralysis of the sacristan who tried to stop her, and took a boat for Brussels. The Antwerp magistrates sent a letter of protest to Duke John of Brabant, who instructed that the town officials should receive the statue and accompany it to its new home (as depicted in the third tapestry).<sup>4</sup> The fourth tapestry, exhibited here, illustrates the climax of the story, the arrival of the statue in Brussels and its subsequent veneration.

As in the previous pieces of the set, the tapestry is structured like a triptych, with the principal narrative events separated by the pillars of an arcade made up of shallow stone arches supported on pseudo-Italian pilasters and plinths. Winged putti in the spandrels of the arches hold heraldic shields, representing, from left to right, the arms of Portenau, Burgau, Kyburg, and Ortenburg (like those depicted in the first tapestry, these arms refer to Habsburg possessions in Austria. The armorials in the second and third tapestries represent Spanish properties). The narrative reads from left to right, the earliest scene appearing within the left arch. Beneath the gaze of a priest and his acolytes, who watch from a bridge, Beatrice Soetkens, holding the statue, disembarks. As in the previous tapestries, the statue represents a seated Virgin with the Christ child standing on her left knee. The statue is assumed to have been copied from an original, probably burned during looting in 1580; a close analogy is provided by a statue in the Chappelle Saint-Basile de la Confrérie du Saint-Sang, Bruges.<sup>5</sup> Beatrice is received by Duke John and other dignitaries who kneel in supplication before the statue. The duke, dressed in sumptuous robes and wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece, is in fact a portrait of Philip the Handsome

(1478–1506), son of Emperor Maximilian I, king of Castile from 1504 to 1506, and father of Charles of Austria. The kneeling figure holding a letter with a seal in the lower left corner of the scene is an unmistakable portrait of Franz von Taxis. The Latin inscriptions on the banners above and below explain the narrative (the order in which they are to be read indicated by the letters Q, R, S, T): *Q Portum cymba tenet populus ruit undique clerus / obvius it proceres littora duxque petunt* (The boat anchors in the port, the people throng from all sides, the clergy come to meet it, the notables and the duke himself head for the shore); *R Celica magnanimus veneratus munera princeps / Excipit inflexo poplite sacra manu* (The noble-minded prince, having venerated this gift from heaven, receives the sacred object, kneeling, in his hand).

Within the central and widest arch, we see the statue being carried on a litter through the streets of Brussels amid a throng of ecclesiastics and dignitaries. Four angels support a canopy over the statue with the inscription *AVE REGINA · CELORV[M]* (Hail Queen of Heaven), while the statue's importance is additionally signified by the sumptuous textile, suggestive of fifteenth-century Italian silk brocade, on which it rests. The litter is supported by two men of whom the hindmost, wearing the arms of Aragon and Sicily, has the unmistakable features of Charles of Austria, duke of Brabant since the death of his father in 1506 and, since March 14, 1516, king of Spain, as demonstrated by the crown that he wears. The man holding the front of the litter is his younger brother Ferdinand (who was to succeed Charles as emperor in 1556). The man walking behind Charles has been identified as Philibert II, duke of Savoy (d. 1504), Margaret of Austria's second husband.<sup>6</sup> Franz von Taxis, kneeling and holding a letter carrying a seal in his hand, is represented again in the right foreground, while the man kneeling opposite him has been identified as his nephew and heir, Johann Baptista von (Jean Baptiste de) Taxis.<sup>7</sup> The inscription below reads: *S Grata pheretra duces subeunt natusque paterque / Fertur ad optatam virgo serena locum* (The dukes, the sons and the father, place themselves under the precious litter. The serene Virgin is carried toward the place she longs for).

The final two scenes are presented within the right arch, where we see a group of people praying before the statue, now placed above an

altar. Foremost among this group is Marie d'Évreux, who is said to have followed the statue on foot until it reached in its final resting place. She is represented here with the features of Margaret of Austria, sister of Philip the Handsome and regent of the Low Countries during the minority of Prince Charles. Margaret is accompanied by Charles's brothers and sisters, Ferdinand, Eleanor (wife of Manuel of Portugal and later of Francis I of France), Isabella (who was to marry Christian II of Denmark), Mary of Hungary, and Catherine (who was to marry John III of Portugal, Manuel's successor). A sixth woman behind has been identified as Theodora Luytvoldi, wife of Franz von Taxis, who himself appears once more in the right foreground of the scene, again holding a letter with a seal attached. Above the heads of the praying group, we see the statue and its altar frontally, from a distance, with Beatrice Soetkens watching over it alone in her role as guardian, the task she was to perform until her death. The final two inscriptions read: *T Sistitur in sancto miseris patrona sacello / Nec despecta frequens concio vota facit* (She is placed in the holy shrine as patron to the poor; the people coming together address prayers to her that are not despised); *U Hanc age devoto cultu venerare Mariam / Illa feret meritis premia digna tuis* (Come, worship this image of Mary in devoted veneration. She will send thee recompense in accordance with thy merits).

These narrative scenes are enclosed within a border that resembles those of the other three tapestries in all but the narrative inscriptions within the banners, the rectangular cartouche sewn in the lower right border, and the armorial of Margaret of Austria in the top center (as opposed to those of Tirol, of Philip the Handsome, and of Duke Charles shown, respectively, in the first, second, and third tapestries). Each corner features a wreath with the profile of a helmeted warrior at its center. The upper border has two banners, each separated by a cornucopia that flanks a central armorial. The lower border holds three banners separated by entwined flowers. The side borders are centered by coats of arms and scrolls bearing mottoes, between pseudo-Italian motifs of candelabra, putti holding swags of pearls, and masks. The arms in the left border are those of the Taxis family, as confirmed by the emperor Maximilian on May 31, 1512 (per fess, in the first: or, an eagle issuant sable, crowned or; in the

second, azure, a badger argent. As the result of a bad restoration, the eagle has been replaced by three "alérions").<sup>8</sup> Scrolls above and below carry the motto *HABEO QUOD DEDI* (I have what I have given). The arms in the right border belong to Franz von Taxis's mother, Tonola Magnasco (argent, an uprooted tree vert, supported by two lions gules facing each other).<sup>9</sup> On this side the motto reads *DUM VIXIT BENE, BENE VIXIT* (While he lived a good life, he lived well). In the lower part of the right border a tapestry-woven panel has been sewn to the main tapestry. It carries the inscription: *Egregius / franciscus de / Taxis pie memorie / postarv[m] m[a]g[iste]r / hec fieri fecit an[n]o 1518* (The noble Francesco de Taxis of pious memory, Master of the Posts, caused these to be made in the year 1518).

#### Patron

Although the tapestry inscription identifying Franz von Taxis as the patron of this set has been sewn to the border, the style of the lettering is consistent with that of the narrative inscriptions and the patch appears to be as old as the tapestry to which it is attached. Any doubt about its authenticity is further allayed by the prominent portrayal of Franz (no fewer than four times within the set), once in the third scene of the third tapestry, and then again, in each of the main scenes of the fourth tapestry. On each occasion he is portrayed in association with ancestors or living members of the Habsburg dynasty. As Crick-Kuntziger suggested in her various studies of the set, the intention of this association appears to be a celebration both of Franz von Taxis's advancement and of the patrons who advanced him. In the final scene of the third tapestry, where he appears as the messenger receiving Duke John's directive to the Brussels magistrates, the duke is portrayed with the features of the emperor Frederick III, while his son has those of Frederick's son the emperor Maximilian. The Taxis postal service had been founded by Franz's grandfather Roger von Tassis in Tirol, the province whose arms appear in the center of the top border of the first tapestry. Subsequently, Ferdinand and Maximilian concluded a joint treaty with the house of Taxis in 1489 for the organization of an international postal service, an event to which this scene presumably alludes.

In the scene of his next appearance, the fourth tapestry of the set, the duke is portrayed with the features of Philip the Handsome. In this case the document that Franz holds probably represents the charter whereby Philip created him captain and master of the posts on March 1, 1501. Chronologically, his next major advancement was in 1507 when, in conjunction with Maximilian and the young archduke, Charles of Austria, Margaret of Austria renewed his commission, presumably represented by the document that he holds in the right-hand scene. Finally, the apogee of his career came with the charter that Charles, following his accession as king of Spain, signed with Franz and his nephew and heir, Johann Baptista, on November 12, 1516. This renewed and expanded the Taxis postal domain to include Rome, Naples, and Verona, and this is presumably the significance of the document that Franz holds in the central panel in close proximity to a portrayal of his nephew and Charles of Austria.

The intended location for the tapestries is not documented. Notre-Dame du Sablon stood directly opposite the Taxis residence in Brussels, and as Franz left money in his will for the construction of a funerary chapel in Notre-Dame, it has generally been assumed that the tapestries were intended to hang there (documentation is lacking because the church archives were destroyed during the bombardment of Brussels by the French in 1695). Support for this assumption is provided by the eyewitness account of Juan Cristóbal Calvete de Estrella, who described the tapestries at the church while he was accompanying Prince Philip on his tour of the Low Countries in 1549.<sup>10</sup>

The date at which the tapestries were made has been the subject of some debate. Crick-Kuntziger suggested that the letters Franz holds in the three scenes represent the charters by which he was advanced by each of the patrons depicted, an assumption supported by the prominence of the seal affixed on each letter, and by the fact that each (illegible) inscription is different. The latest and most important of these advancements was the one he and Johann Baptista von Taxis received from Charles on November 12, 1516. Assuming that the commission must have been initiated before Franz's death late in 1517, Crick-Kuntziger therefore suggested that this final appointment may have



been the occasion that stimulated the commission of this tapestry, a dual celebration of Taxis, his patrons, and the church in which he was now making preparations for his own interment. Assuming that the commission was placed late in 1516 or early in 1517, and allowing six months for the preparation of the cartoons, and twelve to eighteen months for the weaving, the tapestries would then have been completed sometime late in 1518, the date specified in the cartouche on the last tapestry.

This chronology was challenged by Le Maire in 1954 and 1955. Arguing that the nature of the mottoes and the perfect tense in which they were stated indicate that Franz was dead at the time they were written, she suggested that the date of 1518 cited in the inscription referred to a posthumous commission, initiated by his nephew Johann Baptista in accordance with Franz's wishes. She deduced support for this theory on the basis of the collar worn by the man walking behind Charles in the central scene. Maintaining that this was a portrait of Philibert of Savoy, and that the collar he wears is therefore that of the Order of the Annonciade, she argued that the collar is represented in a form that reflects a modification enacted on September 11, 1518.<sup>11</sup> Considering that the identification of this figure with Philibert is not certain, and that the pendant of the collar is obscured by his hands, this argument is not fully convincing, and it was challenged by Crick-Kuntziger's riposte that the collar is identical with one worn by a figure in the tapestry of the *Miraculous Communion of Herkinbald* (whose design is securely dated 1513; fig. 60) and in the *Discovery of the True Cross* tapestry (close in date; fig. 61).<sup>12</sup> Further circumstantial evidence for a conception and weaving by 1518 is provided by the lack of evidence of substantial influence from the Raphael cartoons, which might have been more marked if the conception had not taken place until 1518.

#### Designer

The attribution of the design to Bernaert van Orley (1488–1541) was first made by Crick-Kuntziger in 1930. She correctly noted the marked contrast between the style in which the series was conceived and that of the *retardataire* sophistication of the designs of contemporary high-quality Brussels production.<sup>13</sup> Her attribution of the design to van Orley was based on evidence that he had already worked at the



Detail of cat. no. 16

church of Notre-Dame du Sablon in 1512, when he painted a triptych of the apostles Saint Matthew and Saint Thomas for the altar of the Carpenters and Masons Guild. Prior to his appointment as court artist to Margaret of Austria on May 23, 1518, van Orley had already painted portraits of the six children of Philip the Handsome in 1515 (destined for the king of Denmark), and in 1516 those of Charles, Eleanor,

and Isabella. He may thus have been an obvious choice of designer for Franz von Taxis, and the fact that the portraits of Margaret and Charles conform exactly to portraits by van Orley's hand has generally been taken as confirmation that the design is his. Further support for this assumption is provided by the pseudo-Italian borders, whose scrolls and candelabra were to appear in a more developed form in designs for

a genealogical series that van Orley is documented as having designed for the Nassau family in 1530 (fig. 142). Crick-Kuntziger's attribution has been accepted by most subsequent commentators, including the authors of detailed studies of van Orley's activity as a tapestry designer.<sup>14</sup>

As Crick-Kuntziger and, more recently, Farmer and Ainsworth have commented, the conception of the *Notre Dame du Sablon* tapestries marks a striking development in Netherlandish tapestry design. While van Orley followed a traditional formula in arranging the narrative within an architectural framework, the framework is represented not as the traditional multifaceted Gothic tracery, richly encrusted with jewels, but with motifs that are clearly intended to be Italian. Although some of the figures within the set are depicted in stiff and formulaic poses (perhaps resulting from van Orley's inexperience as a tapestry designer), there is no obvious recourse to established patterns, and the costumes avoid the highly decorated patterns and virtuoso contrasts of textures displayed by many contemporary high-quality tapestries. Most importantly, the narrative episodes have a much greater sense of depth than most contemporary Netherlandish tapestries and a much greater sense of realism. For example, in the first two tapestries, Soetkens's abode is shown as very simple, but visualized with great particularity, with a wooden stool, tile floor, chamber pot, clogs, and rush mat. Similar comments apply to the representation of the artist's workshop. The intense visualization of the legendary events of the story was entirely novel in Netherlandish tapestry design.<sup>15</sup>

Although Souchal and others have assumed that this new direction was stimulated by the arrival of the *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons, the absence of any Raphaelesque citations and

figure types suggests that van Orley's inspiration lay elsewhere, perhaps in the *Last Supper* tapestry (fig. 67) woven after the Leonardo fresco design for Francis of Angoulême before he became Francis I, king of France, in 1515.<sup>16</sup> This is supported by the character of the borders, which were also novel in Netherlandish tapestry design. Rather than the floral borders then in vogue (or the grotesques of the *Acts of the Apostles*), the *Notre Dame du Sablon* borders are conceived in sculptural and architectural terms that encompass elements familiar from Italian art (albeit distorted through a Northern lens), including swags, wreaths, and candelabra. Again, these components suggest a possible influence from the *Last Supper* and the Louise of Savoy and Francis of Angoulême heraldic tapestry (fig. 64) woven between 1512 and 1514.

The *Notre Dame du Sablon* series is additionally important in that it embodies a sizable portrait gallery of the Habsburgs and of the family of Franz von Taxis, under the guise of the protagonists of the legend. While historic anecdote and archival evidence indicate that this was not a new phenomenon in tapestry design, few portraits can be securely identified today, so this set is valuable for providing explicit evidence of this practice. Van Orley was to develop the seamless incorporation of highly realistic portraits within a broader narrative to much greater effect during the 1520s with the *Battle of Pavia* (see cat. nos. 35, 36, and figs. 140, 147), the *Genealogy of the House of Nassau* (see fig. 142), and the *Hunts of Maximilian* (see cat. nos. 37–40 and figs. 109, 141).

#### Place of Manufacture

The place of manufacture is undocumented, but considering the place of residence of the patron, the subject matter of the tapestries, and

the probable identity of the artist, it seems reasonable to suppose that the set was woven in Brussels. The materials, colors, and style of weaving are consistent with the quality of products that were evidently being produced in the town by this date.

1. A. Van Ruymbeke in Brussels 1976, p. 85.
2. The vision was illustrated in the left section of the first tapestry, of which the lower part is in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, and the upper portion, formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, has been lost since World War II. The middle section, showing Beatrice requesting permission from the town magistrates, was acquired by the *Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Brussels, in 1963. The upper portion of the right section showed Beatrice taking the statue to the workshop of an artist (formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, also missing since World War II), and the lower half, the return of the statue to its niche (Île-de-France Villa Museum, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat); A. Van Ruymbeke in Brussels 1976, pp. 86–88.
3. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; *ibid.*, pp. 89–91.
4. Completely restored in 1963 and now at the *Musée Communal*, Brussels; *ibid.*, pp. 92–93.
5. G. Derveaux-Van Ussel in Brussels 1976, pp. 145–46.
6. Le Maire 1955.
7. Crick-Kuntziger 1930a, p. 54.
8. Crick-Kuntziger 1956b, p. 32.
9. Crick-Kuntziger 1930a, p. 53; Le Maire 1935.
10. Crick-Kuntziger 1956b, p. 33; A. Van Ruymbeke in Brussels 1976, p. 85.
11. Le Maire 1954, pp. 214–15; Le Maire 1955, pp. 233–39.
12. Crick-Kuntziger 1956b, p. 33.
13. Crick-Kuntziger 1930, pp. 12, 14.
14. Souchal in Paris 1973, p. 207; A. Van Ruymbeke in Brussels 1976; Farmer 1981, pp. 304–8; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 36–39.
15. Crick-Kuntziger 1930; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 36–39.
16. Souchal in Paris 1973, p. 207; A. Van Ruymbeke in Brussels 1976, p. 98.



## Nobilitas

Eighth in a set of nine tapestries known as the *Honors* (*Los Honores*)

Design by Bernaert van Orley and other unidentified artists, ca. 1517–20

Woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1520–25

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
500 x 865 cm (16 ft. 4¼ in. x 28 ft. 4¼ in.)

7½–8 warps per cm

Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de la Granja de San Ildefonso (TA–8/4, 10026278)

**PROVENANCE:** 1523–26, seven pieces of set in pawn to the Fuggers in Antwerp; spring 1526, purchased by Charles V; May 1527, lined and displayed at Valladolid on occasion of christening of Prince Philip (later Philip II); 1544, listed in inventory of Charles V's tapestries in Brussels; probably taken to Spain by Charles V in 1555 or by Philip II in 1559; 1562, removed from fortress of Simancas; 1576, exhibited at the monastery of Guadalupe for meeting of Philip II and King Sebastian of Portugal; 1599, listed in inventory of Philip II's possessions; by descent in the Spanish royal collection; 1713, cleaned and restored; 1713, 1747, and 1753, in use as winter decoration at the Buen Retiro palace, Madrid; 1751–53, restored and rewoven at the Real Fabrica de Santa Barbara, Madrid; since 1957, displayed at the Palacio Real de la Granja de San Ildefonso (near Segovia).<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Mâle 1931, pp. 367–73; Crick-Kuntziger 1943, pp. 77–80; Steppe 1968, pp. 720–34; Delmarcel 1971; Steppe and Delmarcel 1974; Delmarcel 1977a; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, vol. 1, pp. 35–44; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 147–54; Mechelen 2000 (with bibliog.).

**CONDITION:** Excellent, considering the age and size. The tapestries have been conserved at the royal tapestry manufactory in Madrid on a number of occasions in the course of the last two centuries, but the original design, colors, and materials are well preserved.

With a total surface area of 403 square meters and incorporating depictions of 336 different figures, the nine-piece *Honors* set is one of the most sumptuous and visually complex group of tapestries produced in Brussels during the sixteenth century or, indeed, in any period or anywhere. The set embodies an elaborate allegorical program concerning the theological and cardinal virtues that a ruler—here identified with the Habsburg emperor through insignia and portraits—must practice in order to overcome the hazards of Fate, to achieve Fame, Nobility, and Honor, and to avoid Infamy. The weaving, if

not the original conception, of the set was probably commissioned to celebrate the coronation of Charles V as king of Germany and his assumption of the title of Holy Roman Emperor-elect in 1520. The set derives its name from the subject of the fifth tapestry, the *Triumph of Honor*, which was sent to Charles V in 1526 as a sample to encourage him to pay for the whole set. Embracing an enormous range of classical and medieval sources, this manifesto of royal ethics provides a veritable compendium of northern European Renaissance thought and learning, which has recently been the subject of a detailed analysis by Delmarcel (to which the present text is heavily indebted).<sup>2</sup> At the time the set was woven, it was unquestionably the most ambitious propagandistic exercise in the tapestry medium that had ever been undertaken, an astonishing demonstration of the potential of high-quality Brussels tapestry production by the end of the 1510s.

### Description and Iconography

Each of the nine tapestries in the set is conceived as a theatrical tableau, in which the principal allegory is elevated on a stage or pediment in the center of the composition, surrounded by a myriad of figures from religious and literary sources who exemplify that quality or its opposite. Following the order established by Delmarcel, the tapestries represent the following subjects: Fortuna (Fortune); Prudentia (Prudence); Virtus (Virtue); Fides (Faith); Honor (Honor); Fama (Fame); Justitia (Justice); Nobilitas (Nobility); Infamia (Infamy). The main premise of the set is introduced by the first tapestry, *Fortuna*, which depicts the Island of Fortune (fig. 128). Fortune rides blindfolded through the sky over her island, scattering roses on one side and stones on the other. Crowds of people attempt to swim to the island, some with success, some with disastrous consequences. In the center of the island a servant holds Fortune's wheel, which has the power to elevate men to the highest achievement, and then to cast them down again, a concept that was articulated in late antiquity by Boethius in *De consolazione philosophiae* (524) and that received wide dis-

semination in medieval didactic tracts. The wheel is shown from three angles. The one facing front represents the present (*PRAESENS*). The imperial crown, sword, and scepter appear on the wheel's upper rim, with the inscription HONOR below, while the date 1520 on a small cartouche on the platform at the right of the tapestry invites association between this ascendant position and the coronation of Charles at Aachen in October 1520. At either side of this central wheel two other wheels represent the future.

This visualization of the mutability of Fortune and the ascendancy of the Habsburg emperor sets the stage for the didactic exposition of the following tapestries. These embody the precept that a ruler who follows the path of Wisdom (as depicted in *Prudentia*, the second tapestry; fig. 129) will defeat Fortune's inconstancy by exercising Moderation and Fortitude (*Virtus*, the third tapestry). The fourth tapestry, *Fides*, depicts the Temple of the Seven Virtues, in which Faith is enthroned in the center, flanked by personifications of the other two theological virtues, Hope and Charity, with the cardinal (civil) virtues below: Wisdom, Moderation, Justice, and Fortitude. At the right of this panel the virtuous ascend a staircase that leads, in the next tapestry, *Honor*, to a grand court where Honor presides, surrounded by famous kings and princes as his judiciary. This tapestry was evidently designed to form the centerpiece to the entire ensemble because the staircase at the left is balanced by a complementary staircase at the right, from which other figures are ascending from the Temple of Good Fame, depicted in the succeeding tapestry, *Fama*. This, the sixth tapestry, is dominated by a figure of Fame sitting astride an elephant, who blows two trumpets, representing good and bad fame, as famous figures from the past move in procession below her stage. The seventh tapestry represents the Temple of Justice (*Justitia*), where Justice (the main public virtue of a prince according to medieval didactic treatises) is enthroned between Fortitude and Temperance. The ninth and final tapestry depicts the Procession of the Dishonorable (*Infamia*; fig. 130), with a figure



Deus in excelsis. Iuxta ritibus nō fulget amplex  
Sepe refert gressis nomina clara probis

Cui pia supremi rursus est custodia totius  
Hinc beat eterna nobilitate deus









that represents the author of the series sitting in his studio at the right, pen in hand, beneath a lengthy inscription that directs the viewer to the underlying lesson of the set:<sup>3</sup>

*So, if you are given strength, may perpetual Honour,  
Fame and renowned Nobility shine brightly,  
And neither Fortuna tear you with her wheel,  
Nor infamous Depravity with her marks:  
Act like an image which teaches by honourable order  
Act so that Reason commands the five senses,  
And prudently reflect on Death, Man, and God,  
How fierce, fragile and severe they are  
Now crushing evil with the pressure of your heels  
May you drive out all wickedness far away.  
Soon the virgin Astraea, more brilliant than the  
Evening Star,  
And Virtue amidst her other sisters,  
Will come thus to bestow honour on your heart  
To make you worthy of all kinds of praise  
And you will partake of your desire. Farewell.*

Situated between the Temple of Justice and the Procession of the Dishonorable, *Nobilitas* is the eighth tapestry in the set and provides a visual meditation on the nature of nobility, which, like Fame and Justice in the preceding tapestries, was considered to be an aspect of *virtus publica*. This, the public behavior of a ruler (rather than his personal ethics and private virtues, which were considered in earlier tapestries of the series), was the subject of discussion in such works as Brunetto Latini's *Li livres dou tresor* (1266–68) and Erasmus's *Institutio principis christiani* (1516). Nobility is conceived here as having three aspects: theological (nobility bestowed by God); natural (i.e., innate good qualities); and civic (bestowed by the community). As in the other tapestries, the principal theme of this tapestry is illustrated by a wide-ranging and esoteric choice of exempla.<sup>4</sup>

Theological nobility, the most important manifestation of nobility that a ruler should possess, occupies the central third of the tapestry as defined by the inscription, *THEOLOGICA NOBILITAS*. The inscription on a scroll in the top border of this center section suggests that this quality depends above all on *pietas*, an appropriate honoring and recognition of God (somewhat incongruously defined here in terms of the classical god of thunder, Jupiter): *Cui pia supremi cura est cultura Tonantis / Hunc beat eterna nobilitate deus* (He whose pious care is the honor of the supreme Thunderer, him the god blesses with

eternal nobility).<sup>5</sup> Theological nobility is illustrated by two scenes, of which the lower depicts the anointing of David. David kneels while Samuel drips oil from a horn over his head in accordance with the Old Testament description. In place of his own brothers, however, David is surrounded by exemplary figures from the Old Testament and history: Gideon, Judas Maccabeus (one of the Nine Worthies), Abraham, Simeon, Queen Helena (mother of Constantine, the first Christian emperor), and Esther. The presence of Gideon would have been especially resonant for the Burgundian members of the Habsburg court because he was the patron of the Order of the Golden Fleece, of which Charles was elected the Grand Master in Brussels in 1516. A second, more overt reference to the Burgundian Habsburg court is provided by Esther, who is represented with the features of Margaret of Austria.

The upper half of the central section shows the Coronation of the Virgin. Mary kneels before an enthroned God the Father and God the Son, who place a crown on her head, above which is represented the dove of the Holy Spirit. This scene appears in the center of a mandorla surrounded by cherubim and angels, two of whom support a scroll below the Virgin's feet with an inscription taken from the first book of Samuel (2:30): *Dicit Dominus, Quicumque me honorificaverit glorificabo eum / Qui autem me contemnunt, erunt ignobiles. Primum Regum, 20* (The Lord saith, for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Kings 20). As Delmarcel has noted, the anointing of David never served as a prefiguration of the Coronation of the Virgin in medieval exegetical literature, and the juxtaposition of the two subjects, God's choice of a worldly and a heavenly ruler, was evidently intended here to underscore the divine selection of earthly rulers and thereby equate theological nobility with the holders of highest office. The anointing of David, the first of the Old Testament kings who enjoyed a personal relationship with God, was an especially resonant parallel for the quasi-mystic rites that lay at the heart of the imperial coronation ceremony. Along with Abraham, Moses, Gideon, and Samuel, David was frequently cited in the prayers that were associated with the imperial coronation ceremony.<sup>6</sup>

The central section is divided from the left and right sections of the tapestry by two

monumental columns whose capitals carry a stylized M in place of a classical motif, atop which are cartouches capped by angels. The inscription on the left cartouche reads *Suma apud deum nobilitas est clarum esse virtutibus. Hieronymus* (For God the greatest nobility is to be famous for virtues. Jerome). This inscription provides a link to the subject of the left half of the tapestry, indicated by the inscription next to the woman flying in the air at the top, *NOBILITAS NATURALIS* (natural nobility). This quality is defined by the inscription in the banderole in the upper border: *Mens generosa, licet titulis non fulget avitis / Sepe refert gestis nomina clara probis* (The nobly born spirit, even if it does not shine with ancestral titles, often produces famous names by virtuous deeds). Again, this quality is illustrated by two principal vignettes. In the foreground scene Noah's sons have found their father uncovered and drunk from the juice of the vine that he had planted. Ham mocked him, but Shem and Japheth covered him up, thus demonstrating their innate nobility. Behind Noah's head we see the goat whose drunken behavior first led Noah to try the fermented grape juice. The inclusion of Noah in this scene may have been determined in part by his identification as the founder of the Habsburg line in a number of contemporary genealogies, including Jean Lemaire de Belges's *Les illustrations de Gaule et singularités de Troie* (1510–13), a history of the world written for Charles of Habsburg (future Charles V).<sup>7</sup> To the right of Noah, Tobias, another example of filial piety from the Bible, watches the central scene depicting David's coronation.

Above the scene of Noah, the emperor Trajan sits enthroned beneath a canopy capped with an inscription that reads *Satius est me / meis rebus gestis florere / quam maiorum opinione niti et vita vivere / ut sint posteris meis* (It is enough for me to live by my past deeds than to depend on the reputation of my ancestors, and to live in such a way that my deeds pass on to my descendants). Trajan represents self-acquired nobility. On account of his reputation as the model administrator of justice, deriving from nobility of soul, he was identified in medieval exegesis as the only "heathen saint."<sup>8</sup> Trajan is accompanied by other exempla of Justitia. One of these is Tarquinus Priscus, celebrated by Valerius Maximus as an example of self-acquired nobility because he became king of









Detail of cat. no. 17

Rome through his own virtue. A second is Agatocles, described by Boccaccio as a despot until his coronation, after which he ruled with moderation. The potter's wheel at his feet alludes to his humble origins, in recognition of which he always used earthenware vessels. The third, Marcus Regulus, also celebrated by Boccaccio, was a Roman farmer who was subsequently appointed a consul. At the top of this section, the embodiment of natural nobility is in the act of placing a crown on Trajan's tent, and is attended by Apollo (PHEBVS), who appeared as the protector of the fortunate in the first tapestry and who here rides a three-headed monster indicative of the past, present, and future.

The significance of the right section of the tapestry is underlined by the inscription accompanying the woman flying in the sky

who bears an escutcheon depicting the double-headed Habsburg eagle: NOBILITAS CIVILIS (civic nobility). The theme is introduced by the inscription in the cartouche at the top of the column dividing this section from the center one: *Principibus placuisse non ultima laus est. Horati* (To have pleased princes is not the highest praise. Horace). This quotation from Horace's *Epistles* (1.17.35) completes a passage in which it is stated that deeds, rather than praise, embody the highest public achievement. This reflection is developed by the inscription in the cartouche in the upper border: *Regiaque ingenuis pietas insignibus ornat/Quemlibet illustres ac habet inter heros* (Devotion to his royal duties adorns anyone with inborn honors and ranks him among the illustrious heroes).

Civic nobility is also illustrated by two principal scenes of which the uppermost

depicts the triumphant return of Joseph to Egypt. Joseph was celebrated by Philo of Alexandria as an exemplum of a statesman who was rewarded for his wisdom and magnanimity in high office. The lower scene depicts the denouement of the legend of the Brabant Swan Knight, as it was idiosyncratically developed from various sources in Jean Lemaire de Belges's allegorical chronicle *Illustrations de Gaule*. In the foreground, Julius Caesar dubs his "nephew" Octavian (per Lemaire) the ruler of the fiefdom of Germania. The kneeling figure of Octavian has the features of Charles's grandfather and imperial predecessor, Maximilian I. Behind, Brabo, the legendary ancestor of the dukes of Brabant, presents Caesar with a coat of arms that, according to Lemaire, represents both the old kingdom of lower Austria and the modern house of Austria.



### Patron and Date

The earliest documented reference to the set occurs in a contract between the weaver, Pieter van Aelst, and the Fuggers, the rich Augsburg bankers, drawn up at Whitsun of the year 1523, and relating to the partial repayment of a loan of 2,686 Flemish pounds, 12 shillings, and 6 stivers that van Aelst had received from the Fuggers on July 24, 1522. According to the contract, van Aelst repaid 1,000 pounds and as surety for the balance he pawned seven large tapestries of *Fortuna* woven with silk and gold, with a total surface area of 670 ells, that he valued at 3,050 pounds. As Steppe first recognized, in view of the enormous size of these tapestries and as *Fortuna* was the first tapestry in the set, there can be no doubt that these were seven of the *Honors* set.<sup>9</sup> Still unable to redeem the debt in January 1525, Pieter van Aelst made a contract with Wolf Haller von Hallerstein, agent of the Fuggers in Antwerp, according to which the Fuggers were entitled to sell the seven tapestries, along with two others pieces pawned to different creditors. Van Aelst urged, however, that they should first be offered to the emperor for whom they were made (“der keyserlycker maiesteyt, dair voiren die tapisseryen—alzoehy Pieter vercleerde—gemaict zyn”) to see if he wished to purchase them. The Fuggers agreed to this condition, and van Aelst arranged to send a sample, the *Triumph of Honor* (valued at 500 pounds), to Spain, where Charles lived between 1522 and 1529. As Haller von Hallerstein had close contacts with the Habsburg court, traveling to Spain with Charles in 1517 and negotiating the financing of the bribes that Charles distributed at the time of the imperial election in 1519, it is likely that the arrangements between van Aelst and the Fuggers were undertaken with Charles’s knowledge. The date at which Charles finally paid for the tapestries can also be established with some precision. According to the first documentation of the set within the Habsburg collection, an inventory of Charles’s tapestries compiled in Brussels in 1544, the nine pieces “d’honneur” were purchased in “civile” (Seville). As Charles only visited Seville on the occasion of his marriage to Isabella of Portugal between March 10 and May 14, 1526, the financing for the final purchase presumably derived from the dowry that Charles received during this visit. Confirmation that payment was made in 1526 is provided by an inventory

drawn up in January 1527 regarding the estate of Jakob Fugger “the rich.” It records that the Fuggers owed van Aelst and his associate Agostino Turchi 2,692 ducats and 147 maravedis from a total of 12,000 ducats paid for a “guldin tappetzerrey,” while Charles V is listed as a debtor for 12,091 ducats for a “guldin tappetzerrey” by Pieter van Aelst.<sup>10</sup>

On the basis of the 1523 contract with van Aelst concerning the seven tapestries and the 1544 royal inventory, Delmarcel, the principal historian of this series, has suggested that the series may have been commissioned by Charles in celebration of his election on June 28, 1519, as the King of the Romans and Emperor-elect of the German Hereditary Lands, or of his coronation at Aachen on October 23, 1520, when the pope granted him the right to use the title emperor and to carry the imperial insignia of scepter, sword of state, and double crown. As noted above, the date 1520 appears in a small cartouche in the first tapestry of the set, which depicts the imperial insignia above the wheel of Fortune. Delmarcel takes this as the date at which the cartoons were painted and interprets the imperial insignia as a specific reference to Charles’s coronation at Aachen on October 23, 1520, rather than as a more general demonstration of the supremacy of imperial power through the practice of the virtues.<sup>11</sup>

This assumption has important ramifications for the interpretation of other allusions to imperial insignia and the Burgundian Habsburg household that appear within the set, particularly within the *Nobilitas* tapestry. For example, for Delmarcel the escutcheon held by Civic Nobility—a two-headed eagle, sable on a field gules—alludes to the arms that Charles adopted following his election in 1519.<sup>12</sup> The figure of Joseph in his chariot below the arms is thus an allusion to Charles’s joyful entries following his landing at Vlissingen in June 1520. Similarly, Delmarcel interprets the coat of arms that Brabo is handing to Caesar—a bar argent on a field gules—as a reference to Charles. As noted above, these arms are described in Lemaire’s *Illustrations de Gaule* as the arms of the royal house of Austria, whose territories had included the duchy of Brabant from the twelfth century. Subsequently the arms were also adopted by some towns in Brabant. On this basis Delmarcel suggests that the escutcheon represents a conflation of the two districts and that the

only person to whom this conflation can refer is Charles, who, from his majority in 1515, was the only duke of Brabant.<sup>13</sup> By implication, the portrayal of the anointing of David in the central scene of the tapestry is specifically a metaphor for Charles’s coronation, rather than a more general celebration of the divine nature of the imperial election. Most important of all, the representation of Maximilian, Charles’s grandfather, in the *Nobilitas* tapestry thus represents a posthumous tribute to the new emperor’s forebear (Maximilian died on January 19, 1519), rather than a panegyric. Delmarcel finds support for his interpretation of the iconography—that the set was conceived as a moral incentive for the conduct of the new emperor—in the inscription on the final tapestry, which he takes as programmatic.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this undoubtedly valid reading of the iconography of the completed tapestries, it nonetheless leaves certain questions unanswered, mainly concerning the genesis of the project: the dates at which the series was conceived, the program was elaborated, the preliminary designs were drawn up, and the full-scale cartoons were executed. Considering the size and quality of the tapestries, they would each have taken about two years to weave. Such large sets were normally woven in a staggered process, in groups of three or four pieces, but even if it is agreed that the first seven were all woven at the same time, and thus in a suitable state to mortgage at Whitsun 1523, the work must have begun by late spring 1521, only six or seven months after Charles’s coronation in October 1520. This hardly seems enough time for the conception of the iconographic scheme of this enormously complex set, its interpretation into a detailed design, and its translation into full-scale cartoons. In comparison, the cartoons for the *Conquest of Tunis*, of comparable scale and complexity, prepared for Charles V by Jan Vermeyen during the 1540s, took more than two years to complete (see pp. 391–92 below). Even allowing for the fact that the *Honors* cartoons may have been produced by a large group of artists working together on an important court commission, it seems unlikely that the design could have been conceived, and the cartoons painted, in anything less than eighteen months. Although the date of 1520 that appears in the first tapestry may therefore indicate the year in which

that cartoon was painted (if it was not a later adaptation to a cartoon that had already been painted, in order to customize it with reference to the election at Aachen), it seems quite likely that the overall scheme of the set, and even some of the other cartoons, may have been prepared well before the October 1520 ceremony.

If we allow a period of between eighteen and twenty-four months for the elaboration of the designs and the execution of the cartoons, the conception of the series would then lie in the spring or early summer of 1519, a period coinciding with the imperial election in June of that year. This dating is certainly more acceptable than an assumption that the whole scheme was devised and rushed into production in 1520. There is, however, a further consideration. If the series was commissioned to celebrate Charles's election as Holy Roman Emperor in June 1519, why is no overt reference to Charles included within the tapestries, especially within the *Nobilitas* tapestry, in which his grandfather Maximilian is portrayed as Octavian, founder of the line of Germanic emperors, and his aunt Margaret of Austria appears as Esther, attending the coronation of David? Considering the frequency with which patrons were depicted in contemporary Brussels tapestry production, why is the figure of David not a more obvious portrait of Charles V? Although various arguments can be proposed to answer this question, they are all somewhat tenuous and in the absence of a clear and obvious explanation we cannot help but notice that the insignia that Delmarcel interprets as references to Charles might equally be taken as references to his grandfather or to the imperial role of the Habsburg house in general. For example, the arms carried by Civic Nobility were carried by Maximilian between 1508 and 1519, and those on the escutcheon that Brabo hands to Caesar could be simply a reference to the greater Austrian territories of Maximilian. Most significantly in this respect, the letters that appear at the top of the columns in the *Nobilitas* tapestry are stylized M's, presumably for Maximilian, rather than K's for Karolus.

While Delmarcel's assumption that the *Honors* set was planned and designed for Charles from 1520 onward has the attraction of simplicity and logic, the foregoing questions open up an alternative possibility, namely, that the original momentum for the *Honors* set came

not from Charles but from his aunt Margaret of Austria (a possibility that Delmarcel acknowledges in passing but does not fully explore) and his grandfather Maximilian. Van Ysselsteyn has mooted the idea that the *Nobilitas* panel may have been commissioned by Maximilian, but the context in which this suggestion was made was so compromised by factual error and whimsicality that it has been largely disregarded, along with her assumption that the *Honors* set is composed of elements from three different design series.<sup>15</sup> Delmarcel rejected the possibility that the *Nobilitas* panel, or the set as a whole, could have been created as a panegyric for Maximilian, because the didactic text and implied address to Charles is so explicit in the final tapestry.<sup>16</sup> Yet, it must be asked whether these two elements were really so exclusive. On the contrary, it is far more likely that a commission for a didactic demonstration of the values embodied by the imperial role would have derived from the future emperor's guardians and mentors rather than from the future incumbent himself. And if Margaret and Maximilian were responsible for the conception and development of the scheme and preliminary plans (if not for the weaving and payment of the tapestries), the inclusion of themselves in the guise of guides and forebears follows naturally.

Margaret of Austria was evidently a keen, if rather impecunious, tapestry patron, whose court advisors were almost certainly responsible for some of the complex allegorical design series woven during the 1510s (such as the *Twelve Ages of Man*; see fig. 62, which has several points in common with the *Honors*). Similarly, although Maximilian was notoriously short of money for much of his reign, and not in a financial position to pay for very large tapestry commissions, we know that he did make a number of acquisitions from leading Tournai and Brussels workshops through the agency of Margaret, his daughter, during the 1510s. The lack of documentation relating to Maximilian's activity as a tapestry patron has generally led to the assumption that he was not especially interested in the medium. But was this really so? Considering his dynastic and familial links to the Burgundian court, and his evident interest in the arts as a tool for consolidating the Habsburg *imperium*, perhaps he may have played a more important

part than hitherto realized. As Delmarcel himself has noted, the allegorical and triumphant character of the iconographic scheme of the *Honors* had much in common with one of Maximilian's well-documented propagandistic exercises, the enormous engraving of a triumphal arch, the *Gate of Honor*, between 1511 and 1518, which was designed by a team of German artists and printed from large woodcuts. This print featured three gateways that were dedicated to Honor, Nobility, and Fame, which are also featured in the *Honors* set as the highest goals of the Renaissance ruler.<sup>17</sup> The combination of the didactic tone of the *Honors* with the presence of portraits of Margaret and Maximilian, but not of Charles or his brother Ferdinand, certainly suggests that the concept of this series may have originated in the minds of the future emperor's guardians, rather than in that of the young incumbent himself. And if the set was conceived under the aegis of Maximilian and Margaret of Austria, as a celebration of the values represented by the Habsburg imperial rule, we might then conjecture that the development of the design had reached an advanced stage before Maximilian's death and that the execution of the set was then approved by Charles following his election.

Complementary questions in a discussion of the genesis of this design concern the political context in which the set was conceived and the audience for whom it was intended. Delmarcel's studies have demonstrated the extent to which much of the iconography and tone of the series derived from the *speculum principis*, or "mirror for princes," tradition, as manifested in literary and figurative form during the late medieval era. Although Delmarcel acknowledges that Charles conceived the set more as a tool of imperial propaganda than as an object of contemplation, his interpretation of and approach to it are colored by the notion that it represents the most glorious manifestation of this tradition.<sup>18</sup> Yet if the didactic program unquestionably provides the ostensible iconographic structure of the set, as is explicit in the moral conclusion that appears in the final scene, the extreme richness and scale of the set, as well as the enormous cost involved in producing it, clearly demonstrate that it was never envisaged as a didactic work of art in a narrow, meditative sense, for private contemplation and







reflection. On the contrary, as one of the most ambitious and expensive exercises of artistic patronage undertaken by the Habsburg court, it was intended for public display, a glorious affirmation of the values of the imperial dynasty, and of the qualities of leadership that the emperor's subjects might expect of their leader. As such, it was a fitting descendant to the *Story of Gideon* woven for Philip the Good seventy years earlier. Again, considering the scale of this exercise, and the circumstances in which the imperial election took place in 1519, it is more logical to suggest that the series was conceived in a period when Margaret and Maximilian had a vested interest in celebrating and ensuring the continuation of the Habsburg imperial dynasty.

#### *Author of the Iconographic Program*

As Delmarcel has demonstrated in his detailed study, the iconographic scheme synthesized an enormous range of ancient and medieval philosophical and didactic erudition the roots of which stretched back to works like Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (translated into French in 1372 for Charles V of France); Cicero's *De inventione* and *De officiis* (published in French in 1470 and 1493, respectively); Macrobius's fifth-century commentary on Cicero's "Somnium Scipionis," with a classification of the virtues that was to be very influential during the fifteenth century; and Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*, explicating the theme of fortune, which had already been reproduced in sixty editions before 1500.<sup>19</sup> These classical meditations on the state of man in the world and the nature of the virtues had been expanded in such medieval texts as Alain de Lille's *De virtutibus et de vitiis et de donis spiritus sancti* (ca. 1150) and *Anticlaudianus* (1181–84)—a direct source for this series—and other thirteenth-century works by Thomas Aquinas, Peraldus, and Hugo Ripelinus. Much of this material was then reinterpreted in didactic works such as Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1356–66), translated into French in 1378; Christine de Pisan's *Le livre de Prudence* (1405); and Martin le Franc's *L'estrif de Fortune et de Vertue* (1447).

A second, related, group of sources that evidently informed the conception of the *Honors* set were the didactic works known as "mirrors for princes" that were written for the instruction of young princes and rulers. These

included John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (1159); Thomas Aquinas's *De regimine principum ad regem Cypri* (1265); and Aegidius Romanus's *De regimine principum* (1268–86), translated by Jean Wauquelin in the fifteenth century for Philip the Good. The continuing vitality of this didactic tradition is demonstrated by a series of publications that appeared in the period in which the *Honors* set was conceived: Erasmus's *Institutio principis christiani*, dedicated to Charles in 1516, Guillaume Budé's *L'institution du prince* (written in 1518–19 for Francis I of France), and Thomas Elyot's *Boke Named the Governour* (dedicated to Henry VIII in 1531). In turn, these treatises on the ethics of rule were supplemented by a rich variety of epitaphs and panegyrics written for the dukes of Burgundy and the house of Habsburg of which recent examples included Jean Lemaire de Belges's *Le temple d'honneur et de vertus* (1503) and Michel Riz's *Le changement de fortune en toute prospérité* (1506–7). The models and examples provided by the foregoing literature were supplemented by other exemplary texts, ancient and contemporary, such as Valerius Maximus's *Facta et dicta memorabilia* (A.D. 31), Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*, and Lemaire's *Illustrations de Gaule*. Finally, a wealth of illustrative material was also provided by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which received widespread dissemination in the *Ovide moralisé* and Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* (1350–75, published in Latin in 1472 and in French in 1498).

If the foregoing sources provided the underlying philosophical and didactic ethos on which the *Honors* set is structured as well as an abundance of material for depiction of the central themes, a more immediate model for the dramatization and visual program of the set seems to have been the theatrical tableaux that were such an important part of the celebrations associated with the reception of a new monarch at one of his principalities during the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century. Some of these embodied very complex allegorical schemes with themes closely related to those of the *Honors* set. Delmarcel has demonstrated that the tableaux arranged for the joyful entry of Charles into various Netherlandish towns following the declaration of his majority in 1515 may have provided the immediate inspiration for the *Honors* set. Remy de Puys, the court historian, has left a detailed account of the

entry into Bruges in April 1515 when twenty-seven stages were erected, of which the tableau of the fifth stage closely resembled that of the third tapestry in the *Honors* set, with a prince enthroned above the wheel of Fortune, and Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence restraining Fortune from turning her wheel. Fortune carried a Latin inscription, which translates, "I who conquer all am conquered by virtue" and which reappears on the *Virtus* tapestry. Similar tableaux were arranged when Charles returned to the Low Countries in 1520, of which the most elaborate was staged at Antwerp on September 23. On this occasion, the program was produced and published by Pieter Gillis, town clerk of Antwerp (friend of Thomas More and Erasmus). The tableaux were mounted on thirteen stages, each forty feet long, which were constructed by 250 painters and 300 carpenters. Each represented the emperor—*autocrator*—accompanied by a virtuous attribute, trampling on the corresponding vice, a scheme that incorporated many parallels with the *Honors* tapestries.<sup>20</sup>

On the basis of various figures and concepts cited in works by Jean Lemaire de Belges, Margaret of Austria's official court historian, Mâle proposed that this leading humanist thinker and intellectual may have been responsible for the *Honors* program.<sup>21</sup> But since Lemaire fell from favor after 1512, Delmarcel has questioned this identification, suggesting instead that his successor, Remy de Puys, may have been the author. Delmarcel also invokes the name of Juan Luis Vives, who worked in Louvain between 1513 and 1523, and Erasmus, although as he correctly notes, the eulogistic tone of the *Honors* scheme is alien to the more satirical character of Erasmus's other written work.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Designer and Cartoonists*

Even allowing for the somewhat schematic design of the *Honors* set, and the reuse of certain figure and facial types, the physical preparation of preliminary designs from the complex libretto and the elaboration of these designs into full-scale cartoons must have necessitated the involvement of a large number of artists over an extended period of time. In a preliminary study of van Orley's tapestry designs, Crick-Kuntziger attributed the principal role in the design of the set to this artist, primarily on the basis of the similarity between the portraits



of Margaret of Austria and Maximilian in the *Nobilitas* tapestry and van Orley's portrayals of these figures in his paintings and, to a lesser extent, between some of the figures and architectural details with those that appear in van Orley paintings of the 1510s.<sup>23</sup>

Subsequent authors have been more cautious in following this lead, and both Farmer and Ainsworth skirted the issue in their studies of van Orley's tapestry work, presumably because the conception and design of the *Honors* set are so out of character with those of the *Notre Dame du Sablon* set that van Orley is presumed to have designed about 1516–17 and the four-piece *Passion* set that he designed for Margaret of Austria as documented by a contract of 1520 (figs. 131–34).<sup>24</sup> With a new understanding of the chronology of the development of the *Passion* cycle between 1518 and 1522, and because of the possibility that the cartoons for the first two designs may have been painted by another artist altogether, or adapted by van Orley from a well-established model, the relationship of this artist to the *Honors* designs becomes even more complex.<sup>25</sup> In fact, as Delmarcel has suggested in his various publications on the *Honors* set, the enigmatic character of the set must depend on the involvement of a number of artists besides van Orley.<sup>26</sup>

Study of the designs reveals that there is a contrast in style between the figures in various tapestries. This contrast is most apparent when comparing the first and last tapestries, *Fortuna* (fig. 128) and *Infamia* (fig. 130), with the second and third tapestries, *Virtus* and *Prudentia* (fig. 129). While the greater dramatization of the figures in *Fortuna* and *Infamia* may, in part, depend upon the nature of the subjects illustrated in these scenes, these tapestries also demonstrate a much greater degree of characterization in the faces and gestures of the figures (who do indeed display traits that correspond to those that appear in later designs that are attributed to van Orley), whereas those in *Virtus* and *Prudentia*, especially the female figures, are

more stylized and formulaic. While this complex question requires further investigation, it suggests that we are dealing with a collaborative work in which several different artists were involved, perhaps one in which van Orley may only have played an important role at a relatively late stage in the execution of the cartoons. Delmarcel suggests that the portrait of a man included in the panel of *Honor* is very close to a portrayal of Floris of Egmond by Jan Gossart, called Mabuse (1478–1532).<sup>27</sup> Other figures and facial types are strongly reminiscent of those in earlier design series, such as the *Triumphs of Petrarch* (see cat. no. 13), from 1507–10, and the *Moralidades*, or in the contemporary work of artists like Quentin Massys, or the less well defined material attributed to Adriaan van den Houte.<sup>28</sup> In view of the dominant presence of the van Orley-type figures in the *Fortuna* and *Infamia* designs, and to a lesser extent in those for *Fama* and *Nobilitas*, it seems quite possible that van Orley was brought in to work on a scheme that was essentially undertaken under the direction of another artist altogether. Certainly, the assumption that van Orley would have been put in charge of this enormous series simply on the strength of his work on the *Notre Dame du Sablon* set and the work that he had undertaken for Margaret during the mid-1510s, primarily portrait paintings, seems questionable. It is just as likely that he may have worked alongside a distinguished group of peers, including Gossart, Massys, and Vellert.

#### Workshop

The tapestries were woven in the workshop of Pieter van Edingen, called Pieter van Aelst, one of the leading tapestry merchants of the day (see above, pp. 131–33). Each of these tapestries would have required a loom more than five meters in length and the continuous engagement of five or six highly skilled weavers for a period of approximately two years. Assuming that the bulk of the set was woven between 1520 and 1523, this was a period in which van Aelst was also acting as the middleman for

a number of major commissions from the Vatican (see pp. 197–99, 225–45, 263–64 below) and other commissions for Henry VIII, king of England. Single-handedly, he must thus have engaged a significant portion of the best workshops and large numbers of the most highly skilled weavers in Brussels during the early 1520s, an extraordinary domination of the industry that was in marked contrast to the more diversified control that developed from about 1530.

1. Mechelen 2000, pp. 10–13.

2. Mechelen 2000.

3. Ibid., pp. 18, 47ff. Transcription and translation of inscription from ibid., pp. 154, 156.  
*Ergo perpetuus, si tibi Vis, Honor*  
*Fama ac Nobilitas clara refulgeat,*  
*Nec Fortuna sua te laceret rota,*  
*Vel famosa notis Improbis suis:*  
*Fac pictura probo que docet ordine*  
*Fac quinis Ratio sensibus imperet*  
*Et prudens recolas horcus, Homo, deus*  
*Quam seuus, fragilis, quamque seuerus est*  
*Iam pressis vicium calcibus obterens*  
*Cunctas excucies nequicias procul.*  
*Mox Astreae virgo clavior Hespero*  
*Et Virtus reliquis cincta sororibus*  
*Sic ornare animum se venient tuum,*  
*Quod dignum omnigenis te facient laudis*  
*Et desyderii compos eris. Vale.*

4. Ibid., pp. 125–41.

5. Ibid., p. 125.

6. Ibid., pp. 127–28.

7. Ibid., p. 138.

8. Ibid., p. 134.

9. Steppe 1968, pp. 729–33.

10. Mechelen 2000, pp. 9–10.

11. Ibid., p. 16.

12. Ibid., pp. 16–17.

13. Ibid., p. 17.

14. Ibid., p. 16.

15. Van Ysselsteyn 1969, p. 126.

16. Mechelen 2000, p. 16.

17. Ibid., pp. 20, 24.

18. Ibid., pp. 19, 28, 154–57.

19. Ibid., pp. 18–20.

20. Ibid., pp. 20–22.

21. Mâle 1931, p. 345.

22. Mechelen 2000, p. 28.

23. Crick-Kuntziger 1943, pp. 77–80.

24. Farmer 1981, p. 308; Ainsworth 1982, p. 28.

25. Delmarcel 1992.

26. Mechelen 2000, pp. 29–35.

27. Ibid., p. 31.

28. Ibid., pp. 31, 43–44.







# The Acts of the Apostles Tapestries and Raphael's Cartoons

The sequence of ten tapestries traditionally known as the *Acts of the Apostles* was commissioned by Pope Leo X in 1515 and woven in Brussels from cartoons designed and painted by Raphael. On December 26, 1519, the first seven tapestries to arrive in Rome were displayed in the Sistine Chapel, the location for which the set was intended. Their novelty and beauty were immediately recognized.

According to Paris de Grassis, master of ceremonies of the papal chapel under Julius II and Leo X, general opinion had it that there was nothing more beautiful in the world.<sup>1</sup> The Venetian connoisseur Marcantonio Michiel noted too that they were considered one of the finest things of their kind that had ever been made, surpassing the tapestries in Julius II's "anticamera," those woven for the Gonzaga from designs by Mantegna, and those made for the king of Naples (all long since lost, together with any knowledge of their appearance and origins).<sup>2</sup>

The *Acts* embodied an iconographic program that was intended to complement the existing decorations in the Sistine Chapel and to celebrate Leo as Christ's representative on earth. Raphael conceived this scheme as a vast woven fresco incorporating lifesize figures acting in fully realized illusionistic settings. Although a number of earlier designs had included modest attempts in this respect, the scale, drama, artistry, and status of Raphael's achievement took tapestry design in a wholly new direction. Through the medium of engraved and woven copies, the *Acts* were among the most effective ambassadors of the Italian High Renaissance style in northern Europe in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, and through their influence on Netherlandish artists such as Bernaert van Orley and Pieter Coecke van Aelst, they fundamentally altered the subsequent development of Netherlandish tapestry design.<sup>3</sup>

## PATRON AND LOCATION

Giovanni de' Medici (1475–1521), the future Leo X, was the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Educated by the humanists who frequented the Palazzo Medici in Florence, he grew up among the works of art that his grandfather and father had amassed. Named

as a cardinal in 1492, he was forced into exile in 1494 when his elder brother, Piero de' Medici (1471–1503), was expelled from Florence. Although Giovanni spent most of the following eight years in Italy, he also traveled to Germany, the Low Countries, and France in 1499. From 1500 on he resided in Rome, where he surrounded himself with artists and writers. Appointed papal legate to Bologna in 1512, he secured the return of the Medici to Florence in 1512, and following Julius II's death in 1513, was elected to succeed him as Pope Leo X at the age of thirty-seven. His new position allowed him to continue his artistic patronage on a munificent scale, and he was to become notoriously extravagant in this respect. Under his direction Raphael continued to decorate the Stanze, the papal state apartments (the first two rooms had been completed under Julius II). At the same time Leo turned his attention to the further embellishment of the Sistine Chapel.<sup>4</sup>

Built between 1477 and 1480 by Sixtus IV, the Sistine Chapel was the setting for the principal religious observances of the papal calendar; it was also, as it still is, the place in which the college of cardinals met in conclave to elect a new pope. It thus enjoyed a privileged status within the Vatican and in a broader sense the Catholic world, and Paris de Grassis described it as the first chapel of Christendom "both in its majesty and structure."<sup>5</sup> It assumed special liturgical significance during the second decade of the sixteenth century because of construction on Saint Peter's (for which Julius II had laid the foundation stone on April 18, 1506); the basilica was in effect at this time an open-air arena, poorly suited to the celebration of major feasts.

The chapel was divided into two sections by a screen (*cancellata*), which, at the date of Leo's accession, occupied a position roughly in its center. The upper chapel was reserved for a congregation of about two hundred, including the college of cardinals, heads of the monastic and mendicant orders, senior members of the pope's household, ambassadors, leading political figures of Rome, and visiting ecclesiastic and secular dignitaries. The lower chapel was occupied by lesser members of the papal household and the laity, including pilgrims and spectators.<sup>6</sup>

At Leo's accession, the decorations of the chapel were already the finest and most elaborate within the confines of the Vatican. The upper walls had been painted in the early 1480s with frescoes depicting the Life of Christ and the Life of Moses beneath a cycle of papal portraits; these frescoes were by leading artists of the day, including Perugino, Botticelli, Signorelli, and Ghirlandaio. The lower register was decorated with fictive hangings brocaded with the della Rovere arms of Sixtus IV. The latest and most splendid addition was the ceiling frescoes of the Sibyls, Prophets, and scenes of Genesis that Michelangelo had executed at Julius II's behest between 1508 and 1512. Spurred by this precedent and evidently intending to leave his own mark, Leo initiated a series of measures to further augment the magnificence of the chapel. Shortly after his election he ordered the replacement of some of the windows and a new cover for the papal throne. He also expanded the choir. Later, in 1518, he charged Paris de Grassis to commission a new, silver-gilt pulpit, new candlesticks, and new vestments—"for he desired, by all means, whatever sustained the *maiestas papalis* in the liturgy."<sup>7</sup> Leo's greatest contribution to the *maiestas papalis*, however, was the commission for a new set of tapestries to decorate the lower walls of the chapel.



Fig. 73. View of the Sistine Chapel with the altar at the far end

Tapestry had long been a key element in the magnificence of the papacy. Evidence that it already figured in the decorations of the Sistine Chapel is provided by the hooks that were installed for it in the walls under Sixtus IV and, more generally, by analogy with subsequent practice.<sup>8</sup> As the walls were also painted with trompe l'oeil hangings under Sixtus IV, it seems that real textile hangings and tapestries were used only on special occasions, a practice that would have been consistent with that in other religious institutions. On Christmas Eve 1513, Leo commanded Paris de Grassis to deck the upper chapel with golden tapestries that normally hung in the tribune of Saint Peter's, and he also ordered tapestries to be hung in the lower chapel. No mention of gold was made in connection with the latter, leading Shearman to suggest that it was Leo's intention to symbolize *maiestas* only within the most privileged part of the chapel. This would also have been consistent with the practice at the leading European courts, where progressions of increasingly fine tapestries served to dramatize the hierarchic sequence of presence chambers.<sup>9</sup>

The forty-seven tapestries in use in the Sistine Chapel before the arrival of the *Acts* set are listed in an inventory of 1518. Twenty of these pieces depicted scenes of the Passion, but they were evidently not a unified set. The other twenty-seven tapestries comprised four groups of "diverse histories."<sup>10</sup> However they were hung, the effect of these heterogeneous elements must have lacked uniformity, in contrast to some of the large commissioned sets that Leo could have encountered during his travels in northern Europe.

The circumstances in which the plan to develop a set of tapestries for the Sistine Chapel was conceived and the voices that played a part in this scheme are undocumented. Generally speaking, however, Leo was following the example set by his Medici forebears and their contemporaries, and by his papal predecessors; many had commissioned custom-made tapestries for their residences and churches.<sup>11</sup> The nature of Julius II's tapestries that were said by Michiel to have been surpassed by the *Acts of the Apostles* is particularly intriguing in this context. They can probably be identified with a *Story of Heliodorus* listed in the 1518 inventory; the subject is not recorded in any other tapestry inventories of the time, and the designs for the set may therefore have been commissioned by Julius from an unidentified Italian artist.<sup>12</sup> In selecting a leading artist at his court for the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries, Leo was thus following a model that was relatively well established in Italy. Nonetheless, the location, purpose, and expense of the commission were exceptional by any standards.

#### THE ARTIST AND HIS DESIGNS

Raphael (1483–1520) was at the height of his career when Leo commissioned the Sistine Chapel cartoons from him.<sup>13</sup> In 1504 his





Fig. 74. View of the Loggia di Psiche, Villa Farnesina, Rome

precocious talents as a draftsman had taken him from Urbino to Florence, where he painted portraits and altarpieces for a wide range of patrons, abandoning the emotional restraint that reflected the influence of his first master, Perugino, for greater drama and movement—under the influence of Leonardo da Vinci—and for greater gravity and larger forms—under the influence of Fra Bartolommeo. Summoned to Rome by Julius II in 1508, Raphael was placed in charge of the fresco decorations of the papal apartments in the Vatican, a task that occupied him, along with many other projects, for the remaining twelve years of his life. The Stanza della Segnatura was painted between 1508 and 1512, and it shows the influence of Michelangelo's work in the Sistine Chapel in its later stages. The artist then turned to the Stanza d'Eliodoro (1512–13). Incorporating heroic figures in dramatic movement in the foreground of clearly articulated perspectival spaces, the compositions of the *Expulsion of Heliodorus* and the *Repulse of Attila* marked a new physicality and dynamism in Raphael's work. With the completion of this room, he had established himself as one of the leading artists in Rome, and the esteem in which he was held is reflected in the proposal made by Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi,

called Bibbiena, papal treasurer under Leo X, that Raphael should marry his niece (an offer that Raphael hesitated to accept, Vasari tells us, because of the possibility that the pope might make him a cardinal). Raphael's stature was enhanced in April 1514 when, following Bramante's death, Leo appointed him one of the three architects of Saint Peter's. In the following year he was also appointed as the "prefect" to supervise and document the excavation and reuse of ancient materials in Rome, a brief that Raphael expanded to embrace a more ambitious archaeological survey. An awareness of the antique informs all Raphael's mature work, whether in terms of actual compositions (taken from literary and archaeological sources) or of architectural settings and sculptures, as well as in the use of the "grotesque" inspired by the decorations of the Domus Aurea, Nero's Golden House.

In order to accommodate the volume and scale of the commissions that he received beginning in the early 1510s, Raphael developed a workshop of skilled artists, including Giovanni Francesco Penni, Perino del Vaga, Giovanni da Udine, Tommaso Vincidor, Giulio Romano, and Polidoro da Caravaggio, to whom he delegated increasing amounts of responsibility in the execution of paintings and fresco schemes from his preliminary sketches. From the mid-1510s on the leading talents in this group, Giovanni da Udine and Giulio Romano, also enjoyed increasing creative autonomy. Raphael was thus able to encompass a remarkable amount of work during the second half of the decade: the fresco decorations in the Stanza dell'Incendio (1514–17), the *stufetta* and loggia in Cardinal Bibbiena's apartments (1515–16), the decorations in the loggia in Agostino Chigi's villa (1517–18; fig. 74), Leo X's Vatican Loggia (1518–19), and the initial plans of the Villa Madama for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (beginning in 1518), along with a large number of paintings and altarpieces. It was in the earliest stages of this period of protean creativity that the *Acts of the Apostles* designs and cartoons were prepared.

Documentary evidence relating to the *Acts* commission is limited, but we do know the dates of the first and last payments to Raphael for the cartoons: he received 300 ducats on June 15, 1515, and a second and final payment of 134 ducats on December 20, 1516.<sup>14</sup> In addition there is an eyewitness account, that of Antonio de Beatis, quoted more fully below, to the effect that the first tapestry had been woven by July 1517; this indicates that the first cartoon or cartoons must have been sent to Brussels early in 1516 at the latest. The evidence thus allows us to postulate the period in which the commission was conceived, the designs prepared, and the cartoons painted.

We can assume that payment for the cartoons would not have started until Leo had approved Raphael's preliminary designs and



Fig. 75. *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes*. Preparatory sketch for the tapestry by Raphael, 1515. Black chalk underdrawing, pen and ink, 22.8 x 32.7 cm. Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna

that the program on which these designs were based would itself have required some months of discussion. The idea for the new tapestry series is likely, therefore, to have been proposed sometime in late 1514 or early 1515, allowing the scheme and the preliminary sketches to be developed during the first half of 1515. An engraving by Agostino Veneziano after a study for one of the panels, the *Conversion of the Proconsul* (Royal Library, Windsor Castle), is dated 1516.<sup>15</sup>

Raphael's creative process in developing the designs of the tapestries is documented by a number of drawings in his own hand and by a larger number of workshop drawings.<sup>16</sup> He appears to have conceived the preliminary compositions in rapid sketches (fig. 75), which were followed by careful studies of posed workshop models, prior to the synthesis of these elements in a final *modello*. This process is demonstrated particularly clearly by the preparatory drawings for the *Charge to Peter* (cat. nos. 19–22), although, as Shearman points out in his discussion of the series, we should not assume that the process was exactly the same for every composition. For reasons that are not entirely clear, several of the drawings relating to the preparatory process are by Raphael's pupils. The likely explanation is that as the compositions were developed, Raphael delegated the elaboration of finished drawings to Giovanni Francesco Penni, while other drawings may have been made to explore alternative compositional solutions. However, the possibility that Raphael's assistants played a large

part in the conception of the series can almost certainly be rejected. The *Acts* commission provided Raphael with an unequalled opportunity to measure his abilities against the masterpiece of his greatest rival in Rome, Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling. In view of the competitive spirit that characterized relations between the leading artists of the day (much to the delight of contemporary patrons) and the elite audience who would see the tapestries in the Sistine Chapel, it seems highly unlikely that Raphael would have delegated the designs for such an important commission.

Since the low-warp loom on which the tapestries were woven reversed the direction of the design, all the preparatory drawings—with one exception, the Windsor counterproof for the *Charge to Peter* (cat. no. 21)—are in the direction of the cartoon, not the finished tapestry. Raphael already had experience in reverse designing for engravings (he had been producing drawings for these for about five years) and for mosaics. Possibly he used mirrors during the composition process to ensure the efficacy of the design in its final orientation.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE CARTOONS

If we can assume with some certainty from the documentary evidence that the cartoons were executed between the summer of 1515 and the end of 1516, the extent of Raphael's personal involvement in the process is more debatable. Vasari tells us variously that Raphael painted all the cartoons with his own hand, and that



Penni helped him considerably with their execution, particularly with the borders.<sup>18</sup> Scholarly opinion now favors the notion that Raphael did indeed play the principal role in the painting of the cartoons, albeit aided by various assistants, including Penni (as per Vasari) for the borders; Giovanni da Udine, who specialized in still lifes, animals, and grotesque decorations and was presumably responsible for the birds and fish in the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*; and perhaps also the young and talented Giulio Romano.<sup>19</sup> Other artists who may have played a part in the project were Perino del Vaga and perhaps in the later stages Tommaso Vincidor; documented in the workshop beginning in 1517, Vincidor was dispatched to Brussels in 1520 to paint cartoons and oversee

the production of a later tapestry commission for Leo X (see below, pp. 229–45).

The cartoons are executed in body color on paper, and as critics have long realized, considerable care seems to have been taken in their preparation.<sup>20</sup> The sheets on which they are painted were meticulously constructed from scores of smaller sheets pasted together in a uniform pattern, and although there are dull and lifeless passages, a substantial portion of the more important areas, as well as some lesser details, are executed in a skilled and confident hand that the specialists generally recognize as Raphael's.<sup>21</sup> No areas were left for the Netherlandish cartoonists or weavers to complete. Analysis of the cartoons by Fermor and Derbyshire



Fig. 76. *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes*. Cartoon for the tapestry by Raphael and assistants, 1515–16. Body color on paper mounted on canvas, 320 x 390 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London





Fig. 77. *The Charge to Peter*. Cartoon for the tapestry by Raphael and assistants, 1515–16. Body color on paper mounted on canvas, 340 x 530 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

reveals relatively little trace of underdrawing. As Bambach has more recently asserted, however, this may be in part because it was common practice to erase underdrawing immediately prior to the application of the paint, and in part because Raphael painted sections of the design freehand, relying only on the detailed *modelli* that he and his workshop had prepared.<sup>22</sup>

The paint appears to have been applied relatively thickly rather than in the more transparent washes that were traditional in Netherlandish production since at least the mid-fifteenth century and that continued to be used throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, as seen in extant cartoons from the 1530s, 1540s, and 1550s. This may reflect no more than Raphael's unfamiliarity with the preparation of tapestry cartoons, but it may also have been determined in part by his anticipation of their ultimate destiny. Since it was not unknown for patrons to repurchase the cartoons for particularly important commissions, Raphael and Leo may well have envisaged that these cartoons would return to Rome, where they could have been exhibited in the Sistine Chapel itself (as was the practice in a number of northern churches) or in another venue. Connoisseurs were also collecting cartoons by

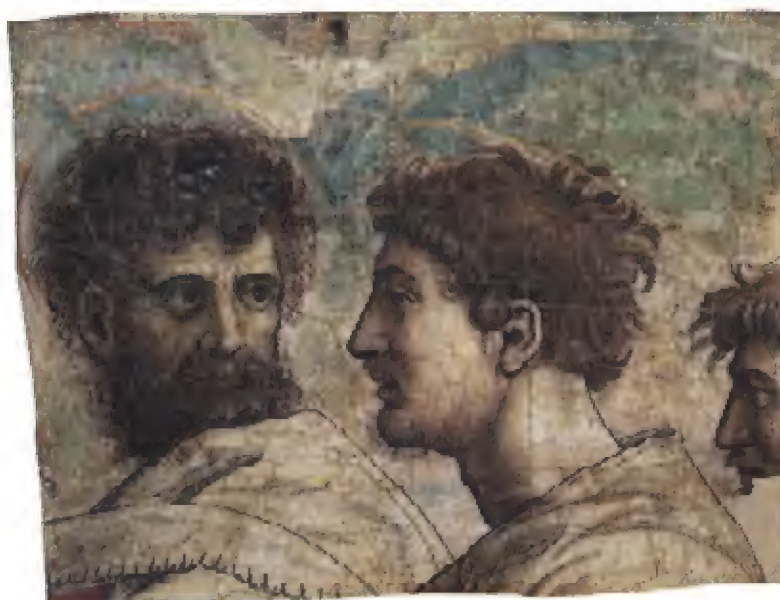


Fig. 78. *Heads of Three Apostles*. Fragment of a duplicate cartoon of the *Charge to Peter*, between 1516 and 1533. Chalk, body color, and ink on paper, 57 x 75 cm. Musée Condé, Chantilly



this date: Raphael, for example, sent the duke of Ferrara preparatory cartoons for various paintings in 1518, including the *Saint Michael* painted for Francis I, and Cardinal Domenico Grimani in Venice appears to have owned the cartoon for the *Conversion of Saul* from the *Acts* as early as 1521.<sup>23</sup> In considering this question, previous commentators have also noted that the inscription on the cartoon of the *Conversion of the Proconsul* reads normally from left to right, and not as a mirror image in keeping with the rest of the composition.<sup>24</sup>

The situation is further obscured by three fragments in the Musée Condé, Chantilly, from a cartoon that duplicates Raphael's *Charge to Peter* (see fig. 78). These fragments are painted on paper with a watermark associating it with paper used in the Netherlands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>25</sup> They differ from the Raphael cartoon in certain details, which they share with the tapestry in the Vatican. The most conspicuous difference is the section of plain landscape added between the heads of the apostles and the more detailed landscape that appears behind them in the original cartoon. Peronnet suggests that the Chantilly fragments are from a working cartoon that was used for the actual weaving of the *Charge to Peter* in Brussels.<sup>26</sup> This theory is supported by the nature of the fragments themselves: the faces are executed in thin washes of color, reflecting the medium of choice of the Netherlandish cartoonists; and the sfumato of Raphael's cartoon is translated into a design that is easier to read in terms of line and contour, elements that the weavers required to guide them. Peronnet suggests that this was a single working cartoon made to accommodate the particular difficulties of the design, but it is also conceivable that it was part of a complete working set. For one thing, Fermor and Derbyshire have recently asserted that the pricking of all the Raphael cartoons (a process used to make a replica), previously thought to have occurred later in the sixteenth century, actually took place *before* the Raphael cartoons were cut into strips in Brussels.<sup>27</sup> Then there is the fact that the original cartoon for the *Conversion of Saul* appears to have been in Cardinal Grimani's collection by 1521.<sup>28</sup> The scene continued to be included in later sets of the *Acts*, however, indicating that the versions in these sets must have been woven from a duplicate cartoon. If duplicates existed for the *Charge to Peter* and the *Conversion of Saul*, why not for the other scenes as well? In 1573 Cardinal Granvelle received word from Brussels that the cartoons were too damaged for further use and that production of the tapestries was then dependent on a set of copies.<sup>29</sup> Yet the seven cartoons that Charles I, then prince of Wales, acquired in 1623, and that survive to this day in the British royal collection, are in relatively robust condition, despite being heavily restored. It therefore seems likely

that the damaged set to which Granvelle's correspondent referred was actually a first set of working copies, preceding the one then in use. (If so, the originals at this date might have already returned to Italy, where nine of them, less the narrow *Paul in Prison*, appear to have been by the early 1620s.)<sup>30</sup>

While the date at which the first set of working cartoons was made requires further investigation, the possibility that the Chantilly fragments derive from a set made in Brussels in 1516–17 would certainly explain why the originals were pricked before they were cut up. Equally, it is perhaps more likely that, as Peronnet suggested, they derive from a single working cartoon made for this particular design in 1516, and that working cartoons for the other designs were only prepared for the weaving of a set of the *Acts* for Francis I in the early 1530s (for which, see below).

#### ICONOGRAPHY

The Raphael tapestries were commissioned within the first two years of Leo X's pontificate, at a time when he was most actively using the arts to endorse papal authority and to project his own status. Following his election, the design of the fresco of *Leo I Repulsing Attila* in the Stanza d'Eliodoro was adapted to incorporate a portrait of him, while the scenes subsequently chosen for the Stanza dell'Incendio, illustrating the lives of Leo III and Leo IV, were selected as vehicles to celebrate both their latter-day namesake and Saint Peter's, the seat of papal authority.<sup>31</sup> The spiritual importance of the Sistine Chapel, the artistic precedents it housed, and the nature of its congregants must have ensured that the entire scheme of the tapestries was very carefully planned. The author—or authors—of the program is unknown, although Leo himself, presumably advised by Vatican theologians, is likely to have played a part in the discussions.<sup>32</sup>

The frescoes in the upper register of the walls of the Sistine Chapel depict on one side, starting from the altar, the Life of Christ and on the other the Life of Moses, Christ's Old Testament antetype. The *Life of Christ* includes the scene in which Peter is promised keys of the kingdom of heaven; thus it demonstrates the authority of the popes as Peter's successors, a theme extended by portraits of the early popes in the niches between the windows. The tapestries commissioned by Leo developed this theme further by focusing on episodes from the lives of Peter, the first of the apostles, and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. The choice of subject was a logical one, as Shearman indicates: "at this date the preeminence of the Roman Church [was] derived in great part—at least in argument—from its foundation jointly by the two Princes of the Apostles and from its consecration by their joint Roman martyrdom."<sup>33</sup> The tapestries' traditional title, the *Acts*



Fig. 79. *The Stoning of Stephen from the Acts of the Apostles*. Tapestry designed by Raphael, woven in the Brussels workshop of Pieter van Aelst, between 1516 and 1521. Wool, silk, and metal-wrapped thread, 450 x 370 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

of the Apostles, is in fact something of a misnomer because they include two events in Peter's life, the Miraculous Draft of Fishes and the Charge to Peter, recorded in the Gospels and pivotal to his appointment as Christ's vicar on earth. In thus celebrating the origins of the papacy, the tapestries paid implied tribute to the present incumbent. Lest anyone miss the point, the overall design incorporated in five of the lower borders a fictive frieze of scenes from Leo's life before his election, and in the side borders an allegorical celebration of his *virtù*. As such, it is the first extant tapestry design in which the borders illustrate a subsidiary iconography related to the principal theme. The wide lower borders also served the formal function of raising the main scenes to a level where they could be seen and appreciated by a seated congregation.

The series includes four scenes related to Peter and six to Paul. In tone and content they recall the sermons for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29) that are now attributed to Saint Maximus of Turin (d. 408–23); these sermons, ascribed in certain early collections to Leo I, were still in use at this time in the Sistine Chapel.<sup>34</sup>

The Petrine cycle begins with the episode of the Miraculous Draft of Fishes (Luke 5:3–11), in which the Galilean fisherman Simon Peter acknowledges Christ on their first encounter and is told that henceforth he will “catch men.” This is followed by the *Charge to Peter* (cat. no. 18): Peter, already armed with his symbolic key (an allusion to Christ's earlier promise of the keys to heaven, Matthew 16:15–19), is with the apostles instructed by the risen Christ to “Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:15–17). The powers thus conferred on Peter are then demonstrated in two scenes: in the *Healing of the Lame Man* (Acts 3:1–8) Peter works his miracle, and in the *Death of Ananias* (Acts 5:1–6) he denounces an attempt at fraud on the part of a member of the early church, who thereupon “fell down and gave up the ghost.”

The Pauline cycle begins with the *Stoning of Stephen* (fig. 79). Stephen was the first Christian deacon and martyr (Acts 7:55–60). Here, a young man named Saul, the future Saint Paul, who “was consenting unto his death” (Acts 8:1), guards the perpetrators' garments. In the *Conversion of Saul* (cat. no. 23), this persecutor of the early church is temporarily blinded by a divine vision on the road to Damascus, a turning point in Paul's career and in what will become his apostolate to the Gentiles (Acts 9:1–7). The next four scenes illustrate the development of this mission: the *Conversion of the Proconsul* (Acts 13:6–12); the *Sacrifice at Lystra* (Acts 14:8–18; fig. 80); *Paul in Prison*, an exceptionally narrow panel showing the saint behind bars in Philippi with the earthquake—represented by a giant breaking out of the ground—that is about to lead to his release (Acts 16:23–26); and *Paul Preaching at Athens*, when Paul declares that the “Unknown God” to whom an altar has been dedicated is the one true God whom the Greeks do not acknowledge (Acts 17:16–34). In this concluding scene Leo himself, a portly figure wearing a red cap, is portrayed behind the saint, along with Janus Lascaris, director of the Greek Academy in Rome, the foundation of which had led to descriptions of the city as a new Athens.<sup>35</sup>

Each of these scenes is surrounded by a *trompe l'oeil* porphyry frame carved with a guilloche pattern, echoing the fictive frames around the papal portraits in the upper register of the walls. In addition, the tapestries were woven with a border on one side and a wide lower border. The latter was conceived as a fictive bronze bas-relief illustrating, in all, five scenes from Leo's life and five from Saint Paul's (both incorporating a number of figures inspired by antique sculptures). The scenes of Leo's life show his entry into Florence following his investiture as cardinal in Fiesole (*Stoning of Stephen*); his visit to Rome in 1492 and his admission to the Consistory (*Miraculous Draft of Fishes*); the sack of the Palazzo Medici in Florence in 1494 and his flight (*Charge to Peter*); his capture at Ravenna in 1512 and his escape to Milan (*Healing of the Lame Man*);



and the recall of the Medici and their entry into Florence in 1512 (*Death of Ananias*).<sup>36</sup>

The vertical borders represent the seven Liberal Arts, the seven Virtues, the Hours, the Seasons, the Elements, and the Labors of Hercules. Although their significance in context is not always clear (a number of borders appear to have been lost following the Sack of Rome, when the tapestries were looted), their allegorical theme is thought to be the triumph of *virtù* over *occasio*, as exemplified in the five fictive bas-reliefs of events from the patron's life.<sup>37</sup> The figure of Hercules in one of the borders, lost from the Leonine set but known from later weavings in Mantua and Madrid (fig. 80), was included, as Shearman demonstrates, in part because of parallels drawn by contemporary commentators between the mythic hero and Leo X, and in part because the Labors of Hercules were variously interpreted as symbolizing devotion to religion and the defeat of man's baser instincts. This border design was thus an

*exemplum virtutis*, a sophisticated celebration of Leo's Christian virtues in terms of classical models.<sup>38</sup>

#### STYLE

Spurred no doubt by the grandeur of Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling, Raphael created a set of designs that in its way was equally groundbreaking, being in essence the first full-scale application of High Renaissance aesthetics to the tapestry medium. Each scene features lifesize heroic figures captured at a single dramatic moment. Each is conceived from a single viewpoint and is framed within its fictive porphyry borders as if by a window. Raised by the wide lower borders, the principal action of the tapestries originally appeared to be taking place in a space that was immediately adjacent to the seated congregation in the Sistine Chapel, an effect that heightened its immediacy; and in each the drama of the moment is underscored by the artist's



Fig. 80. *The Sacrifice at Lystra from the Acts of the Apostles*. Tapestry designed by Raphael, woven in Brussels, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 495 x 621 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

focus on the expressions, physiognomies, and rhetorical gestures of the principal figures, rather than on extraneous narrative or decorative detail.

At a distance of five hundred years, and by comparison with other productions of the period, the *Acts* appear truly revolutionary. Of course, our perspective is distorted by the loss of so much contemporary material, and a number of models must have informed Raphael's approach. For a start, he could have known of the translation of Leonardo's *Last Supper* into a woven form for Francis I. He could also have heard of Bramantino's designs for the *Months*, a set of tapestries commissioned by Trivulzio (see cat. no. 11). Bramantino was in Rome working in Julius II's papal apartments during 1508, immediately after the years in which he had developed those designs. The importance of the commission in Bramantino's oeuvre suggests that it could well have been the subject of discussion with his fellow artists in Rome. An unknown factor is the character of Julius II's "anticamera" tapestries that Marcantonio Michiel included among the three sets surpassed by the *Acts of the Apostles*. However, even if precedents such as these played a part in stimulating Raphael's vision, the realization of tapestry's potential as a medium for monumental figurative art seems to have been his achievement alone.<sup>39</sup>

There has been some debate over the extent of Raphael's involvement with the tapestry medium as such, mostly framed by twentieth-century art historians who themselves had little interest in it. High-quality tapestry enjoyed enormous prestige at this date, and it is difficult to imagine that Raphael was indifferent to its potential. His workshop was after all much involved in tapestry design during the late 1510s and 1520s, and trompe l'oeil tapestries are an integral element of the decorations of the Chigi Loggia di Psiche (fig. 74), the Stanza d'Eliodoro, and the Sala di Costantino (fig. 149). It has even been proposed that the lost Raphael drawings of the Story of Psyche that were the models for the engravings produced by the Master of the Die during the 1530s were conceived as tapestry designs that would have complemented the frescoes in the Chigi loggia.<sup>40</sup> All the evidence suggests that Raphael, his assistants, and their patrons were attracted to tapestry as an illusionistic, figurative medium and took pleasure in the visual conundrum presented by the juxtaposition of woven paintings and painted weavings.

How far Raphael adapted his designs to accommodate the tapestry medium is an open question. It seems unlikely that an artist as responsive as Raphael would have been indifferent to the aesthetics of any medium, and the trompe l'oeil tapestries in the Chigi loggia and the Stanza d'Eliodoro, which are conceived in relatively flat terms, are evidence that he understood tapestry's

innate characteristics. The *Acts*, however, required the weavers to reproduce a design that was conceived in terms of volume and space. In the hands of a lesser artist this might be interpreted as insensitivity. In those of Raphael, it seems more probable that he was consciously pushing the Netherlandish weavers to the limit of their abilities in pursuit of an inspired vision of what might be achieved.

In general, the tapestries have a sober, simplified character that contrasts with the elegance and refinement of Raphael's Stanze frescoes and his paintings at the time. Almost all the protagonists are men, and much of the drama is communicated by expansive rhetorical gestures, in which the individuals point to one another or express their emotions with open mouths and outstretched arms. The argument that this reflects Raphael's attempt to solve the problem of realizing painterly compositions in tapestry is unconvincing; in fact, certain scenes, such as the *Conversion of Saul*, do embody dramatic action or complex illusionistic effects (for example, the reflections in the water in the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*). It seems more probable, therefore, that the monumentality of the designs was calculated to correspond to the simplicity of the texts they illustrate and to their interpretation in terms of what Alberti had defined as the highest form of painting, *istoria*, or history painting, in which he recommended that the number of actors should be limited as in ancient tragedies.<sup>41</sup> Underlying such a motivation may have been Raphael's wish to ensure the clarity of his images and their emotional impact from a distance, reflecting the concepts of *enargeia* ("an elevated clarity or vividness of expression") and *energeia* ("emphasis or force of detail . . . which tends towards hyperbole") current in Renaissance rhetoric and poetics.<sup>42</sup>

#### THE PRODUCTION AND COST OF THE TAPESTRIES

The first mention of the tapestries woven from Raphael's cartoons appears in a diary kept by Antonio de Beatis, secretary of Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, who accompanied the cardinal on his travels through Europe in 1517. Following their visit to Brussels in July of that year, he noted: "Here . . . Pope Leo is having made XVI pieces of tapestry, it is said for the Chapel of Sixtus which is in the Apostolic Palace in Rome, for the most part of silk and gold; the price is two thousand gold ducats a piece. We were on the spot to see them in progress, and one piece of the story of the *Donation of the Keys*, which is very fine, we saw complete."<sup>43</sup> If we assume that the *Charge to Peter* would have taken between twelve and fifteen months to weave, this suggests that work on it must have begun sometime early in 1516. According to the diary of Marino Sanuto, three pieces of the tapestry that the pope was having made in Flanders for the "camere et capella" had arrived in Rome



by July 1519.<sup>44</sup> Paris de Grassis and Marcantonio Michiel, quoted earlier in this essay, described the display of seven tapestries in the Sistine Chapel on December 26, 1519 (missing on this occasion were the *Stoning of Stephen*, *Paul in Prison*, and *Paul Preaching at Athens*). The set was mentioned in a general citation in a supplement to the 1518 inventory, and the ten pieces were listed individually in the 1521 inventory taken after Leo's death.

The identity of the merchant-entrepreneur who was responsible for arranging and supervising the weaving of the tapestries was first established by Müntz on the basis of a legal document about the delivery to Clement VII in 1531 of a set of tapestries of the *Life of Christ*. According to the sworn testimony of qualified witnesses, these tapestries were woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, described as the papal tapissier. The document goes on to attest that the *Life of Christ* tapestries were of even finer quality than the set of Peter and Paul that the same van Aelst had woven for the papal—that is, the Sistine—chapel.<sup>45</sup> Van Aelst was the leading merchant-entrepreneur in the Brussels tapestry industry at this period, engaged in the provision of tapestries to the Habsburg court and the king of England. That he was chosen to execute Leo X's commission is further evidence of his dominant role in the organization and capitalization of high-quality Brussels production.

We can only guess at the technical discussions that followed the arrival of Raphael's designs in Brussels, and the difficulties that the weavers experienced in translating them into wool, silk, and metallic thread. As previous commentators have noted, the weavers introduced a number of changes into the designs, apparently with a view to clarifying certain compositional elements. For example, Peter's outer robe, painted as an orange tan in the cartoons of the *Charge to Peter*, the *Healing of the Lame Man*, and the *Death of Ananias*, has been changed to a strong red in the tapestries, where it now stands out somewhat sharply against the faded tones of the rest. Not all the color shifts, however, were deliberate. Some are the result of the deterioration in the pigments of the cartoon or of the tapestry.<sup>46</sup> Christ's robe in the cartoon of the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, for example, which now appears white, was originally painted red, as can still be seen in the cartoon from its reflection in the water and as it was woven in the tapestry. Perhaps the best record of the original coloration and subtlety of Raphael's palette is to be found in the very fine *Acts of the Apostles* woven for Charles I at the Mortlake works between 1626 and 1636 and now in the Mobilier National, Paris; at the time of writing, this set has never been published in color.<sup>47</sup>

A different type of "clarification" was introduced into the *Charge to Peter*, where the weavers separated the line of the apostles' heads from the landscape behind by the addition of a thin strip of

grass. (Raphael's cartoon has been cut immediately above the apostles' heads at the point where this insertion was made. It is unclear whether the strip was added to the cartoon itself or whether the latter was cut in the process of preparing a working copy—an alternative suggested by the Chantilly cartoon fragments, which incorporate the added strip as part of their design.) The division was almost certainly made to allow the weavers who specialized in flesh and hair to work at the same time as the less skilled hands responsible for the background landscape.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the tapestry in the Vatican set and in that made subsequently for Henry VIII, two later versions woven in the late 1540s or early 1550s (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, fig. 81; and Palazzo Ducale, Mantua) reproduce the faces overlapping the landscape as Raphael had conceived them. Along with other variations of foreground detail, this suggests that the Madrid and Mantua pieces were woven not from Raphael's original cartoon, or the first working cartoon prepared in Brussels, but from a second working cartoon made sometime between the early and late 1540s.

Two other changes that have received much attention in the *Charge to Peter* are the introduction of a tree in the upper right landscape next to Christ's left shoulder, apparently added by the weavers to fill in an area that they may have perceived to be blank and lacking in visual interest (although it is susceptible to symbolic interpretation), and the stars that appear on Christ's robe. Whether such drastic changes would have been made without the approval of the patron or the designer or both is open to question. The once-gold stars, however, like the gold edging applied to the proconsul's cloak in the *Conversion of the Proconsul*, may reflect a more decorative formula to which the weavers were accustomed. The stars were a singularly unfortunate addition because over time the metal thread has tarnished and has stained the surrounding textile, making it difficult for us to imagine the pristine effect of the gold. The reverse of the tapestry shows that this area was actually executed with great subtlety.<sup>49</sup>

Such deviations from the cartoons are relatively minor in comparison with the weavers' fidelity to them as a whole. Indeed, the fact that the weavers succeeded so well in reproducing Raphael's designs is a testament to the sophistication of the industry that had developed in Brussels in the preceding thirty years and the technical advances made during this period, enhancing the weavers' skill at representing different tactile and painterly effects. Writing some years later, Vasari commented: "This work was executed so marvellously, that it arouses astonishment in whoever beholds it, wondering how it could have been possible to weave the hair and beards in such detail, and to give softness to the flesh with mere threads; and it is truly rather a miracle than the work of



Fig. 81. *The Charge to Peter* from the *Acts of the Apostles*. Tapestry designed by Raphael, woven in Brussels, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 483 x 721 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

human art, seeing that in these tapestries are animals, water, and buildings, all made in such a way that they seem to be not woven, but really wrought with the brush.”<sup>50</sup>

Standing in front of the tapestries today, we need to remember that their modern appearance is severely compromised by the passage of almost five hundred years. The colors have faded, the metallic thread is tarnished, the silks have lost their sheen, the wool has been abraded, and the uniformity of the surface has been disrupted by generations of repairs. An effort of imagination is required in order to grasp the original impact of these masterpieces of tapestry art.

The sum of 2,000 ducats for each tapestry that Antonio de Beatis noted in 1517 was echoed two years later by Paris de Grassis, following the display in the Sistine Chapel of the first seven tapestries to reach Rome.<sup>51</sup> Marcantonio Michiel gives a lower figure: “The designs for these tapestries for the Pope were made by Raphael of Urbino, an excellent painter, who received from the

Pope one hundred ducats each, and the silk and gold in them are most abundant, and the weaving cost 1,500 ducats each, so that they cost in all, as the Pope himself said, 1,600 ducats apiece, though it was estimated and spread about that they were worth 2,000.”<sup>52</sup> While this account has a convincing ring, the difference in the total it quotes may reflect the pope’s attempts to rein in contemporary gossip about the cost of the tapestries; in his biography of Leo, Paolo Giovio recorded that he was rumored to have paid for them with money improperly diverted from funds raised for a new crusade and the building of Saint Peter’s.<sup>53</sup> If Michiel’s figure is correct, it suggests that the whole set cost some 16,000 ducats, more than five times the sum that Julius II paid Michelangelo for frescoing the Sistine ceiling. The lion’s share of this amount must have been due to the lavish use of silver and gold thread in the weaving. Shearman compares the figure with the somewhat greater cost of the chorister’s wages between 1515 and 1521 and the valuation of 17,785 ducats placed on the papal tiara in 1521. Such



comparisons are misleading if they are taken to indicate that expenditure of that kind was unexceptional. On the contrary, the Sistine choir was one of the finest in Christendom, while the tiara in question was laden with precious jewels. The fact remains that the cost of the *Acts of the Apostles* was an enormous financial commitment for a single artistic ensemble.

#### THE ORIGINAL NUMBER AND HANGING OF THE TAPESTRIES

As we have seen, Beatis's information in 1517 was that sixteen tapestries were being woven for the pope. Only ten were delivered, however, and no additional cartoons or preparatory drawings have come to light. The discrepancy might be dismissed as a mistake on the part of Beatis or his informant, except for the fact that sixteen tapestries would have been a logical number: there were then sixteen frescoes in the upper register of the Sistine Chapel (Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, painted in 1536–41, eliminated two from the altar wall), and the tapestries appear to have been conceived to hang directly beneath them. The number and dimensions of the pieces delivered also raise problems regarding their original placement in the chapel.

Contemporary accounts indicate that the tapestries were hung for special events. Although they could have been arranged

differently on different occasions, their varying widths, the narrative and visual continuity of the compositions, and the light sources indicated by the shadows on the fictive frames and borders all suggest that they were designed for specific locations. Identification of these locations is complicated by structural changes made to the chapel since the tapestries were woven. The most significant of these was the repositioning of the *cancellata* between 1549 and 1578, from a position approximately midway from the altar to one about two-thirds of the way down, increasing the space allotted to the upper chapel; another change involved the removal of windows on the altar wall and the piercing of doors on either side of the altar.<sup>54</sup> The loss of an unknown number of border elements in the aftermath of the Sack of Rome in 1527 adds to the uncertainties, as do the distortions that may have been introduced by repairs made after the tapestries were retrieved during the 1540s.

The seminal study of the number and intended location of the tapestries remains Shearman's 1972 monograph.<sup>55</sup> Working with a scaled reconstruction of the original floor plan, Shearman proposed that, like the frescoes in the upper register which radiate out from the altar in sixteen bays each separated by fictive pilasters decorated *all'antica*, the two cycles of the *Acts* would also have started at the altar, beginning on either side with the first scene in



Fig. 82. View of the Sistine Chapel with the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries in situ, 1983

each cycle. Both the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, for the Petrine sequence, and the *Stoning of Stephen*, for the Pauline, are less than the standard width and fit such a location, whereas the other panels do not.<sup>56</sup> The reconstruction is on more problematic ground when it comes to determining the respective sides of the altar to which the cycles were allocated, and on this question, as well as on the number of tapestries commissioned, scholarly opinion is at present divided.

Shearman, who believes that the set was probably complete in ten pieces,<sup>57</sup> takes the view that the Petrine sequence was intended to hang below the frescoes of the *Life of Christ*, to the left of the altar (the congregation's right), with the Pauline cycle below the *Life of Moses* on the other side; and his reconstruction is organized accordingly. Two issues raise doubts about this arrangement. In response to what was apparently a long-standing debate that became more heated during the mid-1510s, perhaps as a result of the discussions connected with the *Acts* commission, Paris de Grassis wrote a treatise in about 1515 to the effect that images of Saint Peter should properly appear to the right of the altar, the reverse, that is, of their placement in the reconstruction. Shearman discounts this evidence, on the grounds that there is a note of wounded pride in Grassis's writing that can be attributed to the latter having been overruled precisely in the matter of the *Acts* tapestries.<sup>58</sup> In practical terms, whereas in the reconstruction the Petrine tapestries fit snugly in the bays below the *Life of Christ*, this is not true of the Pauline sequence below the *Life of Moses*: there the tapestry borders do not align with the fictive pilasters separating the frescoes above if the narrow *Paul in Prison* is to be accommodated inside the *cancellata*; and the last of the sequence, *Paul Preaching at Athens*, falls outside the *cancellata*. Shearman defends this apparent incongruity on the grounds that there is a hierarchical distinction between the upper and lower chapels, and that Saint Paul's preaching in Athens is paralleled by the pope's role as disseminator of the word of God to the world at large, represented in the Sistine by the congregation in the lower chapel.<sup>59</sup>

Shearman's reconstruction was subsequently challenged by Gilbert, in a paper published following the display of the *Acts* in the Sistine Chapel for the Raphael quinqucentennial in 1983 (fig. 82).<sup>60</sup> Gilbert argues that the positioning of the Petrine sequence to the right of the altar, under the *Life of Moses*, would have been entirely in line with current thought, as exemplified in Grassis's text.<sup>61</sup> On a formal level, he points out that if the two sequences were designed to hang on the walls opposite those to which Shearman assigned them, the borders of the tapestries would have aligned with the frescoed pilasters above them. An added attraction of this theory is that the narrow panel of *Paul in Prison* would then have

fitted in the equally narrow space next to the *cantoria* (and outside the *cancellata*), the only such space in the Sistine Chapel.<sup>62</sup>

Crediting Beatis's statement in 1517 that the weavers were working on a set of sixteen tapestries, Gilbert believes that the ten pieces delivered between 1519 and 1521 were indeed only part of the original scheme. In support of this view, he points to the unusual asymmetry of the set as delivered and as it would have fitted on the walls of the chapel (regardless of how the two cycles were hung); and to the fact that sixteen tapestries, matching the number of frescoes in the upper register, would have been appropriate for the decoration of the lower. Scenes now missing from the narrative sequence that Gilbert suggests might have been originally envisaged include Peter's escape from prison (to be hung opposite the rare depiction of Paul's escape) and the saints' martyrdoms.<sup>63</sup>

Shearman has held fast to his reconstruction in subsequent publications, without engaging the issues raised by Gilbert.<sup>64</sup> Later commentators, recognizing the problematic nature of the debate, have been unable to advance conclusive arguments either way. Both Harprath and Fermor, for example, have discussed the controversy over the relationship of Petrine imagery to the altar in 1515, and the difficulty of establishing whether a firm conclusion had been reached by the date at which the tapestries were woven.<sup>65</sup> Fermor has also noted that the typological connections between the tapestries and the frescoes above them are open to a wealth of different interpretations in whatever position the tapestries were hung, a point that Shearman himself had made.<sup>66</sup>

More recently, Weddigen has published a new version of Shearman's plan and a defense of his reconstruction.<sup>67</sup> Weddigen supports the argument that the set was complete in ten pieces on the grounds that Beatis's account is unsubstantiated by any other evidence in the shape of documents or drawings, and that Leo continued to place expensive tapestry commissions with the Brussels workshops, suggesting his satisfaction with the fulfillment of this particular order.<sup>68</sup>

The question of the intended number and disposition of the *Acts* tapestries in the Sistine Chapel clearly requires much more detailed discussion than is possible here. All other issues aside, however, the present writer finds the formal correspondence between the borders of the tapestries and the divisions between the frescoes above them a persuasive argument in favor of Gilbert's theories.<sup>69</sup> It seems to me inconceivable that, in planning his designs, Raphael would have ignored such a fundamental element of the chapel's fictive structure as the frescoed pilasters and the rhythm that they established. And if the tapestry borders were aligned centrally beneath the fresco divisions, the scene of *Paul in*



*Prison* could not have fitted where Shearman places it, just inside the screen. Out of that position on the wall, its narrow dimensions make no sense. By contrast, they are explained perfectly if the piece were hung opposite, in the lower chapel beyond the *cantoria*.

On the number of tapestries planned, it also seems to me that Beatis's report in 1517 is not to be ignored. The absence of supporting documentation or drawings does not mean that a sixteen-piece set was never envisaged. We have, after all, no preparatory sketches for the *Stoning of Stephen*, but it was most certainly woven. Nor does the existence of an initial concept inevitably lead to its realization in full. Had a sixteen-piece set of the *Acts of the Apostles* been planned, it may have been interrupted sometime in 1517 or 1518, for reasons about which we can only speculate. One consideration could have been the expense of the papal war with the della Rovere family over the duchy of Urbino in 1517, which necessitated a loan of 800,000 ducats. A temporary halt in the production of the *Acts* might have left Leo less interested in subsequently pursuing the project, especially when new tapestry commissions, such as the *Triumphs of the Gods* and the *Giochi di putti*, were being developed. Or a change of plan could simply have been due to a confluence of different factors, not least the many other demands on Raphael's time during the years preceding his premature death in 1521: the Stanza dell'Incendio, his work on Saint Peter's, his responsibilities for the antiquities of Rome, and the development of other tapestry projects.

Whatever the facts, and this is clearly a debate to which there can be no decisive answer unless new evidence emerges, the ten *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries delivered to Rome between 1519 and 1521 work together as a remarkably coherent group and were an immensely impressive, costly enhancement of the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. The irony is that the tapestries could only have hung as an ensemble in their intended positions between 1521 and 1527, when they were looted and dispersed during the Sack of Rome, a dispersal from which they were retrieved in piecemeal fashion over the following two decades. By the time they had been reunited, the *cancellata* had been moved, and with it the logic of their original placement no longer applied.

#### LATER WEAVINGS

After the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries were woven for Leo X by Pieter van Aelst, a set of cartoons—either Raphael's originals or working copies—evidently remained in Brussels, presumably in van Aelst's hands. Perhaps because of contractual obligations, they were not used again during his lifetime, but within a year or two of his death about 1533 a duplicate set of the *Acts* was woven for Francis I, king of France, in a Brussels workshop working for

Willem Dermoyen and Daniel and Antoon Bombergen. Three pieces had been completed before 1534, and the 1542 inventory of Francis's tapestries lists a set of nine (less the narrow scene of *Paul in Prison*), along with an associated throne canopy.<sup>70</sup> In place of the episodes from the lives of Leo X and Saint Peter shown in the lower borders of the Vatican set, Francis I's tapestries were completed with allegorical scenes that appear to have been designed in his honor.<sup>71</sup> The set remained in the French royal collection until 1797, when it was burned in order to extract the silver and gold from the metallic thread with which it was woven.

The next reproduction we know of was a set made for Henry VIII in about 1540 that was delivered to Westminster Palace in 1542 (not a gift to Henry from Leo as tradition asserted).<sup>72</sup> Sold from the British royal collection at the time of the Commonwealth sale (1649–54), the set entered the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin in the nineteenth century and is presumed to have been destroyed in 1945. Photographs made earlier show that it was woven with the adapted lower borders designed for Francis and that although the *Charge to Peter* incorporated the same landscape changes as the Vatican set, other scenes incorporated variations in the landscape details akin to those in subsequent weavings. Sometime after Henry VIII's tapestries were completed, the cartoons appear to have passed into the hands of the Brussels merchant Jan van Tieghem, whose mark appears on two later sets woven in the late 1540s or early 1550s, one now in Madrid, which was made for Emperor Charles V or King Philip II of Spain, and the other in Mantua, which bears the arms of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga (cat. no. 24). The *Charge to Peter* in these later sets does not have the additional strip of landscape present in the Chantilly cartoon fragments and in the sets woven for Leo X and Henry VIII (and, presumably, Francis I's set), but the variation of other foreground details is consistent with those of Henry's set. Such discrepancies support the idea that Francis's set, Henry's set, and those in Mantua and Madrid were all made from a set of working cartoons (whether these working cartoons had all been made in 1516–17 and then adapted, or whether they were first prepared for Francis I's set is a matter of conjecture, although the latter seems more probable). They also provide circumstantial evidence that when Cardinal Granvelle was told in 1573 that the original cartoons were too damaged to use and that a second set had been substituted, the reference was to a first and second set of working cartoons, not to the originals by Raphael. While these issues require further investigation, they certainly call into question the assumption that the original cartoons were in Brussels at all after about 1530.

The history of the cartoons becomes clearer after 1623, when seven of the originals, now lacking their borders, were acquired

by the prince of Wales, later Charles I of England, from an unknown source in Genoa for use at the Mortlake tapestry manufactory (founded in 1619). At Mortlake several very high quality weavings of the seven designs purchased by the crown were made for Charles between 1626 and 1642 from working cartoons painted by Francis Cleyn.<sup>73</sup> By this time the original cartoons for the *Stoning of Stephen* and the *Conversion of Saul* seem to have entered the collection of Ferdinand II de' Medici, as Francis Crane, the director of the Mortlake works, attempted—apparently without success—to acquire copies of them through the intervention of Amerigo Salvetti, the Florentine resident in London.<sup>74</sup> The cartoons in the English royal collection were permanently reassembled during the

1690s and in 1699 were installed in a gallery specially designed by Sir Christopher Wren at Hampton Court. From this point on they became the object of considerable attention. Among their notable admirers the Jonathan Richardsons, father and son, writing in the following century, celebrated the cartoons as masterpieces of narrative and history painting and did much to establish their status as the epitome of Roman High Renaissance art.<sup>75</sup> Moved to Buckingham House in 1763, the cartoons were returned to Hampton Court by George III in 1804. In 1865 they were transferred to South Kensington—now the Victoria and Albert Museum—where they remain to this day, a grand testament to the contribution that Raphael made to the tapestry medium in the 1510s.

1. "Qui ut fuit universale iudicium sunt res, qua non est aliquid in orbe nunc pulchrius"; Shearman 1972, p. 13, n. 77.
2. "Queste feste di Natale il Papa messe fuori in Capella 7 pezzi di razzo perchè l'ottavo non era fornito fatti in ponente, che furono giudicata la più bella cosa, che sia stata fatta in eo genere a nostri giorni, benchè fussino celebri li razzi di Papa Giulio de l'anticamera, li razzi del Marchese di Mantova del disegno del Mantegna et li razzi di Alfonso, overo Federico re di Napoli"; Golzio 1936, pp. 103–4; Shearman 1972, p. 38, n. 75 (both partial citations); for the passage in full, see Smit 1993b, p. 58, n. 3.
3. The critical study of the Raphael cartoons and the Sistine Chapel tapestries, to which the present writer is heavily indebted, is John Shearman's monograph (1972) on the subject, developed from an earlier publication (White and Shearman 1958). I am also particularly indebted to subsequent essays by Gilbert (1987; on the original disposition of the tapestries), Fermor (1996; on the restoration of the cartoons), and Weddigen (1999; on the antique sources of the designs).
4. Kemper 1999.
5. "[I]sta cappella tam in maestate quam in structura . . . prima mundi"; Shearman 1972, p. 3.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.
7. "[Q]uia omnino volebat, quod maestas Papalis in re divina servaretur"; *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10, n. 59, 13.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5; Smit 1993a, pp. 20, 260; Smit 1993b.
9. Shearman 1972, p. 9.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.
11. See pp. 85–101 above; for the Vatican precedents, see *ibid.*, p. 6.
12. Smit 1993b, pp. 54–55.
13. On Raphael's life and art, see Jones and Penny 1983, with bibliog.
14. Shearman 1972, pp. 2–3, nn. 9, 10.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 102, n. 41.
16. On Raphael's design process, see *ibid.*, pp. 91–137.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–11.
18. See *ibid.*, p. 111.
19. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see *ibid.*, pp. 111–16 (with bibliog.); Fermor 1996, pp. 60–64, 66–70; Fermor and Derbyshire 1998; and Bambach forthcoming.
20. Fermor and Derbyshire 1998.
21. Shearman 1972, pp. 111–15; Fermor and Derbyshire 1998, esp. pp. 244–46.
22. Fermor and Derbyshire 1998; Bambach forthcoming.
23. Shearman 1972, p. 139; Jones and Penny 1983, p. 175.
24. Shearman 1972, pp. 136–37; Fermor 1996, p. 60.
25. Peronnet in Chantilly 1997, p. 79; Menei and Caylux 1997, pp. 164–65.
26. Peronnet in Chantilly 1997, pp. 78–80.
27. Fermor and Derbyshire 1998, p. 236.
28. Shearman 1972, p. 139.
29. Piquard 1950, pp. 113, 124; Shearman 1972, p. 145, n. 67.
30. See p. 202. The seven cartoons now in the British royal collection were acquired by the crown in Genoa in 1623. The English subsequently made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain copies of the *Stoning of Stephen* and the *Conversion of Saul*, both now lost but then apparently in the collection of Ferdinand II de' Medici.
31. Jones and Penny 1983, pp. 147–54.
32. Shearman 1972, p. 90; Shearman 1992, p. 202–7.
33. Shearman 1972, p. 61, nn. 94, 95.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 61, n. 92.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
36. Romeo 1990; Weddigen 1999.
37. Shearman 1972, p. 89; Harprath 1986, pp. 123–24.
38. Shearman 1972, p. 89, n. 256.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
40. Jones and Penny 1983, pp. 186–87.
41. Shearman 1972, pp. 127–31.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 130, nn. 171–73.
43. "Lli (sc: Brussels) papa Leone fa lavorare xvi panni de razza, secondo dicano per la cappella de Sixto quale è nel palazzo Apostolico de Roma, per la magior parte di seta et d'oro; consta il pezzo MM ducati d'oro. Fuimo al loco ad vederli lavorare, et un pezzo de la dimostrazione quando Christo donò le chiavi ad san Pietro, che è bellissimo, il vedimo fornito"; *ibid.*, p. 42, n. 104.
44. Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 263.
45. Müntz 1876b, p. 246; Müntz 1883, pp. 141–44.
46. Fermor and Derbyshire 1998, pp. 246, 249.
47. J. Coural in Paris 1983, pp. 398–408.
48. Shearman 1972, p. 139; Peronnet in Chantilly 1997, pp. 77–78; Fermor and Derbyshire 1998, pp. 249–50.
49. Shearman 1972, p. 134; Fermor 1996, p. 90.
50. "La quale opera fu tanto miracolosamente condotta, che reca maraviglia il vederla, ed il pensare come sia possibile avere sfilato i capegli e le barbe, e dato col filo morbidezza alle carni: opera certo piuttosto di miracolo che di artificio umano, perchè in essi son acque, animali, casamenti, e talmente ben fatti, che non tessuti, ma paiono veramente fatti col pennello"; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, p. 370; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 1, p. 739.



51. Shearman 1972, p. 13, n. 77.
52. "Il disegno di detti razzi del Papa furono fatti da Raffaello da Urbino, pittore eccellente, per li quali el ne hebbe dal Papa Ducati 100 per uno, et la seda et oro de li quali sono abundantissimi, et la fattura costarono 1500 Ducati el pezzo, sì che costavano in tutto, come il Papa istesso disse, ducati 1600 il pezzo per ben che si giudicasse, et divulgasse valer Ducati 2000"; Golzio 1936, pp. 103–4.
53. Shearman 1972, p. 13.
54. Ibid., pp. 22–30.
55. Ibid., pp. 21–44.
56. Ibid., pp. 32, 34–35.
57. Ibid., pp. 42–43.
58. Ibid., pp. 38–41.
59. Ibid., pp. 69–70.
60. Gilbert 1987.
61. Ibid., p. 546.
62. Ibid., p. 544.
63. Ibid., p. 542.
64. Shearman 1986; Shearman 1992, pp. 202–7.
65. Harprath 1984, p. 246; Harprath 1986; Fermor 1996, pp. 15–16.
66. Shearman 1972, p. 34.
67. Weddigen 1998.
68. Weddigen concedes that the plan may require some modification regarding the number of original borders (ibid., pp. 271–72). An issue that remains to be adequately analyzed is the extent to which the arrangement of the surviving borders is the result of repairs and reweaving after the tapestries, dispersed following the Sack of Rome, were recovered for the Vatican collections; see Shearman 1972, p. 141; De Strobel in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, pp. 544–45.
69. Fermor deflects the issue by suggesting that the tapestries may have stretched over the course of time (Fermor 1996, p. 16, n. 21), but if anything the opposite would have been the case. Comparison of the dimensions of extant 16th-century tapestries and those listed for them in contemporary inventories invariably demonstrate that they have shrunk slightly along the length of the warp. For example, the *Story of Abraham* tapestries at Hampton Court, each about 8 m long, have shrunk on the average 25 cm.
70. T. Campbell 1996c, pp. 443–45.
71. Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 151–57.
72. T. Campbell 1996d, pp. 69–75.
73. Shearman 1972, pp. 144–64.
74. Howarth 1994, pp. 155–56.
75. Shearman 1972, pp. 151–52.

18.

## *The Charge to Peter*

From a ten-piece set of the *Acts of the Apostles*

Design by Raphael, 1515

Cartoon by Raphael and assistants, 1515–16

Woven in the workshop of, or on behalf of, Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, 1516–17

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread

490 x 640 cm (16 ft. 1 in. x 21 ft.)

7 warps per cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City (3868)

PROVENANCE: Ca. 1515, commissioned by Pope Leo X; 1517, completed tapestry viewed by Antonio de Beatis in Brussels; December 26, 1519, one of seven pieces of the set exhibited in the Sistine Chapel; 1521, listed in an inventory of Leo X's possessions; pawned after the death of Leo X; September 17, 1526, stolen by the Colonna during the sack of the Vatican Palace but returned shortly afterward; May 1527, stolen by imperial troops during the Sack of Rome; late 1530s, returned to the Vatican; 1544, listed in the papal tapestry inventory; 1578, illustrated in an engraved view of the Sistine Chapel and on regular display there for the next 200 years; from the 17th century, among tapestries displayed on processional route for the Feast of Corpus Christi; 1798, removed to Paris by Napoleonic troops; 1799, possibly one of six pieces exhibited in the Musée du Louvre; 1808, returned to the Vatican; since 1814, continuously exhibited in the Vatican; since 1932, Pinacoteca Vaticana.

REFERENCES: Dussler 1971, pp. 101–2; Shearman 1972 (with bibliog.); F. Mancinelli in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco 1982, pp. 53–56; Joannides 1983, pp. 222–25; Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 264; Fermor 1996; Fermor and Derbyshire 1998; Weddigen 1999.

CONDITION: Moderate. The lighter spectrum of wools and silks is faded and discolored, giving the tapestry a sepia tonality. An impression of the freshness and subtlety of the original coloration is provided by the detail of the reverse (p. 205).

19.

## *Fragment of a Studio Drawing*

Raphael, 1515

Stylus and red chalk on paper

25.3 x 13.4 cm (10 x 5 1/4 in.)

Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris (3854)

PROVENANCE: Everard Jabach collection (L. 2961); 1671, entered the Cabinet du Roi; mark of the commission of the Musée du Louvre (L. 1899) and Conservatory (L. 2207).

REFERENCES: Fischel and Oberhuber 1972, no. 442; Shearman 1972, p. 96, n. 13; Joannides 1983, p. 223; Cordellier and Py 1982, pp. 264, 267 (with bibliog.); London and other cities 1999, pp. 104–7.

20.

## *Fragment of a Studio Drawing*

Raphael, 1515

Red chalk over stylus with traces of leadpoint on paper; cut in two pieces and rejoined

8.1 x 23.2 cm (3 1/8 x 9 1/8 in.), maximum

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Woodner Collection (1993.51.2)

PROVENANCE: Possibly Pierre Crozat collection, Paris; private collection, sold Christie's, London, November 29, 1977, nos. 33 and 34; John R. Gaines collection, Lexington, Kentucky; sold, Sotheby's, New York, November 17, 1986, no. 8; Ian Woodner collection; 1993, given to the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

REFERENCES: Fischel and Oberhuber 1972, nos. 443–44; Joannides 1983, p. 223; London 1987, pp. 43–44; Oberhuber in Washington 1995, pp. 159–61 (with bibliog.); London and other cities 1999, p. 104.

21.

## *Counterproof*

Workshop of Raphael, 1515

Offset from a drawing in red chalk over stylus

25.8 x 37.5 cm (10 1/8 x 14 3/4 in.)

The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (12751)

PROVENANCE: 1696, Bonfiglioli inventory; 1721, seen by Jonathan Richardson in the Palazzo Bonfiglioli, Bologna; Consul Joseph Smith; George III, Inventory A, vol. 3, p. 48.

REFERENCES: Popham and Wilde 1949, no. 802; Shearman 1972, p. 96, n. 12; London 1983, no. 155; New York 1987, no. 26; London and other cities 1999, pp. 104–7 (with bibliog.).

22.

## *Modello*

Raphael, 1515

Black chalk underdrawing, pen and brown ink, warm bister wash, white heightening on sepia-tinted paper, squared in black chalk; pentimenti in the keys and some draperies

22.1 x 35.4 cm (8 1/2 x 13 7/8 in.)

Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris (3863)

PROVENANCE: 1526, possibly to be identified with drawing recorded in collection of Cardinal Marino Grimani; according to Pierre Crozat, purchased in Flanders by Jacques Stella; cited as "étant chez Stella" in a letter of J. Schinkelle to Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici; 1693–97, recorded in Claudine Bouzonnet Stella inventory; 1701, Louis Bauyn, seigneur of Cormery, recorded in Bauyn inventory; Philip II, duke of Orléans, regent of France; March–April 1753, Pierre-Jean Mariette sale, Paris, no. 228; purchased for the Cabinet du Roi (L. 1886).

REFERENCES: Fischel and Oberhuber 1972, no. 441; Shearman 1972, p. 97, n. 18, fig. 51; Joannides 1983, p. 224; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 264, 269, 270 (with bibliog.).

The *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries and the cartoons from which they were woven are among the most famous works of art ever produced, widely regarded as seminal documents in the history of the Italian Renaissance. The ten cartoons were commissioned by Leo X in the early summer of 1515, and with the aid of his studio assistants, Raphael completed them by December 1516. The tapestries, woven in Brussels, were all in Rome by 1521. Because the tapestries were intended for use in the Sistine Chapel, their commission provided Raphael with an opportunity to measure his artistic skills against those of his rival, Michelangelo, who had completed the enormous ceiling frescoes of the chapel in 1512. Stimulated by this challenge, Raphael conceived designs that were novel in almost every way, essentially being the first, full-scale application of Roman High Renaissance aesthetics to the tapestry medium. A number of preparatory drawings in his own hand and those of his assistants attest to the care with which Raphael attended to this high-profile and lucrative commission. Of the development of the ten compositions, that for the *Charge to Peter*, the second tapestry in the set, is particularly well documented by the survival of preparatory drawings, the *modello*, and





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Detail of the reverse of cat. no. 18









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the cartoon. The present exhibition provides a unique opportunity to confront the preparatory drawings with the tapestry that was eventually woven of this design. For discussion of the circumstances, iconography, and development of the *Acts of the Apostles*, see pages 187–203 above.

#### *Description of the Tapestry*

Like the first tapestry in the set, the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, the second tapestry, the *Charge to Peter*, illustrates Peter's ascendancy among the apostles and the specific manner in which Christ singled him out to be his vicar on earth following his death. The scene conflates two scriptural texts: the Gospel of Matthew 16:15–19, which records the moment when Christ told Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven"; and the Gospel of John 21:1–17, when Christ appeared to seven disciples and told Peter, "Feed my sheep." Peter kneels in the right foreground of the tapestry holding two large keys in his arms. He looks up at Christ, who stands in front of him, pointing to the keys with his right hand, and to a flock of sheep behind him with his left hand. The ten other apostles stand behind Peter in a group that extends across the center and left foreground of the tapestry. All of them look at Christ except a figure in the center who turns to look at the man behind him. The closeness of the disciples' heads to one another emphasizes the rapt attention they are paying to this moment of designation, while their diverse

expressions and gestures describe their varying characters and emotions. To the left, the prow of a rowboat is drawn up on the bank of Lake Tiberius, which curves around behind the group, dividing the foreground from the landscape beyond. Although the foreground is featureless, it is defined by subtle modulations that suggest beaten earth and small pebbles, articulating the space occupied by the otherwise friezelike group of disciples. In the distance can be seen three figures walking along a tree-lined path beyond which various buildings are visible, including a temple and a building that is on fire.

The central scene is surrounded by a fictive porphyry frame decorated with a running guilloche design and rosettes in the corners; the shadows in the scene indicate illumination from the left. The tapestry is completed at the right by a border that encloses, within a bead-and-reel edging, an elaborate multitiered architectural structure in which the figures of the three Fates are decorously posed beneath the arms and papal insignia of Leo X, all supported at the bottom by two satyrs. Beneath, a fictive bronze relief depicts the events of November 1494: the flight of Giovanni de' Medici from Florence disguised as a monk and, in the main scene, the sack of a palace that could be either Giovanni's palace Sant'Antonio or the Palazzo Medici in the Via Larga. Below this, the tapestry is completed with a running Greek key design in yellow on a dark blue ground.

#### *Iconography and Visual Sources*

As Shearman has demonstrated in his detailed analysis of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the citation of texts by Matthew and John as proof of Petrine, and thus papal, authority had a long and venerable history. Although two of Raphael's most immediate visual sources, Perugino's fresco in the Sistine Chapel and Pollaiuolo's relief for Sixtus IV's ciborium, only alluded to Matthew's text, the precedent for the conflation of the texts derived from late antiquity, as demonstrated by an inscription of the second half of the fifth century in the vestibule of Old Saint Peter's.<sup>1</sup> The importance of these texts as the principal proofs of Petrine authority is demonstrated by their recurrent use in bulls published by Leo in 1513, 1514, 1516, and 1521 (the last appointing Henry VIII Defensor Fidei [Defender of the Faith])—to which he responded, most appropriately in the circumstances but with considerable irony for us now, with the gift of a "gold-embroidered chasuble with an image of Christ giving the keys to Saint Peter, with the arms of the king of England".<sup>2</sup> As Shearman has demonstrated, these texts (along with the injunction to Peter on the occasion of the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*) were among the foremost arguments presented for papal primacy in contemporary exegetical texts such as Domenico Jacobazzi's *De concilio tractatus* and Giovanni Francesco Poggio's *De veri pastoris munere*.<sup>3</sup> The exact significance of the doctrine of the keys is somewhat vague, but according





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to Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, they symbolized Peter's power to remit sins.<sup>4</sup> This power is illustrated in the two subsequent tapestries in the series, the *Healing of the Lame Man* and the *Death of Ananias*.<sup>5</sup>

As Shearman's analysis of the *Acts* tapestries has shown, Raphael assimilated an astonishing breadth of antique and modern sources, as he did in his other mature works, a range that was acknowledged in his own day and cited as proof of his genius. In this case, the principal model must have been Pollaiuolo's relief of the same subject, which provided the inspiration for the pose of the figures for Peter and John in the life study for this design. Donatello's relief of the Assumption (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) may also have suggested the depiction of some of the disciples' reactions.<sup>6</sup> As in the *Miraculous Draft*, Christ's face appears to be derived from the purported true effigy of Christ on an antique emerald cameo that Sultan Bajazet II gave to Innocent VIII. The original was lost, but Raphael's model may have been one of the

bronze medals reproducing the effigy that was struck in the late fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

#### Preliminary Drawings

The process by which Raphael arrived at the finished design is remarkably well documented. Two preliminary drawings and a counterproof of one of them have survived. They demonstrate the ingenuity, artistic skill, and imagination that Raphael brought to the design of this panel, which, as we have seen, occupied a significant place within the iconography of the set as a whole.

The first of the drawings, executed in red chalk and stylus, is now dismembered but can be reconstructed from three fragments and with the aid of a counterproof that was made before its division. The largest fragment represents a standing figure corresponding to that of Christ in the final composition (cat. no. 19), while the two smaller fragments (now joined as one) depict the frieze of apostles' heads (cat. no. 20).<sup>8</sup> The missing elements of the composition are provided by a counterproof now at Windsor (cat.

no. 21). Dressed in everyday clothes, the models are so close to the figures in the final composition as to suggest that the study was made while Raphael was developing an initial sketch from the imagination. Now lost, it may have been similar to the Windsor *Miraculous Draft* drawing, as Raphael sought to develop anatomy and physiognomies with greater realism.<sup>9</sup>

The counterproof records the appearance of the dismembered drawing in reverse. Made by pressing a sheet of dampened paper against the original chalk drawing, the counterproof is of unclear purpose, but it was probably meant to provide Raphael with an idea of how the composition would work in the eventual orientation of the completed tapestry. Claims that the counterproof was reworked by Giulio Romano appear to be unfounded.<sup>10</sup>

As Shearman has noted, the studio studies were presumably accompanied by various drapery and landscape studies, whose results were all subsumed within a more finished *modello* that survives at the Louvre (cat. no. 22), the high





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quality of which has generally been accepted as an indication of Raphael's authorship.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that this was not the final *modello*, for it lacks the sheep and boat on either side and includes certain details, notably Christ's undergarment, that do not appear in the final cartoon. The positioning of the disciples has also undergone further modification in the final design, as represented by the cartoon (fig. 77). A workshop copy of the *modello* survives at the Uffizi, possibly made as the basis for the early engraving by Diana Scultori.<sup>12</sup>

Although the main elements of the studio drawing have been retained in the *modello* (cat. no. 22), there are a number of significant changes, most notably to the figure of Christ, whose sideways pose and raised arm have been replaced with a more frontal posture in which he points toward the keys with one hand and behind him with the other. Shearman has suggested that this modification may have been made to stress the doctrinal significance of this scene. In the studio drawing, the focus was on Christ's dele-

gation of the keys to Peter, as described by Matthew. While this emphasis is retained in the *modello* by Christ's more overt gesture toward the keys with one hand, the meaning is expanded by the manner in which his other hand now points behind him, toward a flock of sheep that appear in the final cartoon, as in John's text.<sup>13</sup> Shearman proposed that this change clarified the ambiguity implicit in Matthew's words, which were interpreted by some exegetical texts as a charge to the apostles in general. By conflating the first charge with the second, the preeminent role of Peter was established beyond all confusion. Following this line of argument, Shearman further proposed that this change would have necessitated a new life study, and that Raphael himself may have cut up the first drawing to include this revised figure within the overall composition.

Shearman's suggestion of a programmatic change during the compositional process has been questioned recently by Clayton, who observed that it is not certain that the earlier com-

position did in fact omit Christ's gesture behind him, and that although the dismembered state of the first drawing could be a result of the process of collation by Raphael himself, the irregular edges of the Louvre sheet may reflect no more than a later attempt to salvage components of a damaged sheet.<sup>14</sup> Whether or not it was Raphael who cut the drawing, the coincidence of the edges of the Louvre fragment and the Windsor counterproof do suggest that Christ's gesture toward the sheep was not part of Raphael's original conception. Indeed, the modification compromises the rhythm and harmony of the original design. This is only partly disguised by the standing figure that was added behind Peter and John at the *modello* stage to compensate for the void created between Christ and Peter and by the greater spacing introduced between the heads of the disciples.

The notion that a later engraving, variously attributed to Giulio Bonasone and Nicolas Beatrizet, may record a lost Raphael-school drawing that provided an alternative, experimental

regrouping that was ultimately rejected seems inappropriate.<sup>15</sup> The clumsy revisions of the figure of Christ, which combines the upward-pointing finger of the initial drawing with a very poorly drawn left hand, along with the exclamatory raised arms of the hindmost disciple, are not indicative of a Raphael-school model. Rather, they suggest that the engraver was unaware of the double significance of Christ's gesture, or that he chose to omit it, along with the landscape and the flock of sheep, to concentrate on the drama of the principal figures.

### *Cartoon and Tapestry*

All the significant changes that appear in the *modello* were retained in the cartoon. There is general consensus among leading connoisseurs of Raphael's work that the *Charge to Peter* cartoon was largely executed by the master himself.<sup>16</sup> The appearance of the cartoon and the tapestry have been altered by differential fading over the years. Traces of madder in Christ's now-white robe indicate that it was originally tinted, and this is confirmed by the reverse of the tapestry, where the robe is a delicate lilac (detail, p. 205). Similarly, dye analysis of the gown of the disciple behind Peter, which now appears gray in the cartoon and green in the tapestry, shows that it originally was dark green with purple in the shadowed areas.<sup>17</sup>

The tapestry varies in distinctive ways from the cartoon in its present state. Raphael's cartoon leaves little space between the heads of the apostles and the landscape above them. By contrast, in the tapestry there is a space of several inches. The explanation is probably provided by a cut in the cartoon that runs around the heads of the disciples, presumably indicating the point at which the heads were separated from the background by the insertion of a

small strip of landscape. The reason this extra section was added is uncertain. It has generally been assumed that it was done to allow space between the areas in which specialist weavers were working on the heads and less specialized weavers were working on the landscape.<sup>18</sup> But it may also have been introduced from a sense that the design of the tapestry would read more clearly if the landscape was removed above the hair of the disciples. The earliest reweaving of the design of which visual record survives, made for Henry VIII about 1540, shows the same distance between heads and landscape, but those woven in the van Tieghem workshop in the 1540s or 1550s have no gap.<sup>19</sup>

The recent discovery of three fragments from a duplicate cartoon of the *Charge to Peter* (see fig. 78), which appear to date from the early sixteenth century and which incorporate the additional strip of landscape as an integral part of the design, suggests that the Leonine tapestry and that of Henry VIII may have been woven from a working copy of Raphael's cartoon rather than from the original.

Comparison of the Raphael cartoon and the completed tapestry reveals two other areas of change that may have been introduced into the working cartoon. A blasted tree has been added to the right of Christ's left shoulder, presumably to compensate for the additional space created by the raising of the skyline, and Christ's robe, plain in the cartoon, is ornamented with stars in the tapestry. As both of these details tend to elaborate areas in the cartoon that were unadorned, it has generally been assumed that these additions were made in the workshop by the weavers, under the influence of the tradition with which they were familiar, in which decoration and symbolic distinctions rather than verisimilitude were emphasized, and in which large bare areas

were considered inappropriate. The stars on Christ's robe also underline his importance. The discovery that the tapestry may have been woven from a working cartoon rather than from the original shifts the responsibility for these changes from the weavers to the Netherlandish artists responsible for painting the working cartoons. As this appears to have been the first tapestry of the set to be completed, it is possible that these changes were made in an attempt to make the design more visually interesting—in traditional Netherlandish terms. However, considering the enormous cost of this commission, it seems unlikely that the Netherlandish cartoonists would unilaterally have made such changes; perhaps they were following instructions contained in correspondence between Brussels and Rome.

1. Dussler 1971, p. 101; Shearman 1972, p. 55.

2. "[P]ianeta figurata tutta, e riccamata d'oro, dove Xpo dà le chiave a San Piero, con l'arme del re d'Inghilterra"; Shearman 1972, pp. 65 n. 118, 66.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 119, with bibliog.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 55, n. 63, and figs. 30–32.

8. Turner in London 1987, no. 12.

9. Shearman 1972, p. 97.

10. London and other cities 1999, p. 104.

11. Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 264, 270.

12. Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 15, p. 434, no. 5 II; Petrioli Tofani 1986–, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 504–5, no. 1216 E.

13. Shearman 1972, pp. 54 n. 61, 55.

14. London and other cities 1999, p. 106.

15. Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 15, p. 17, no. 6; Shearman 1972, p. 97, n. 19, fig. 80; Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 264.

16. Fermor 1996, pp. 66–67; Bambach forthcoming.

17. Fermor and Derbyshire 1998, p. 249. Important evidence regarding the original colors of the cartoons is provided by the very high-quality set after this design woven for Charles I at the Mortlake manufactory between 1625 and 1636, now in the Mobilier National, Paris. See Hefford forthcoming.

18. Shearman 1972, pp. 139–40.

19. T. Campbell 1996d, pp. 72–73.





23

23.

## *The Conversion of Saul*

From a ten-piece set of the *Acts of the Apostles*  
Design by Raphael, ca. 1516

Woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst,  
Brussels, ca. 1517–20

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
484 x 540 cm (16 ft. 2½ in. x 17 ft. 8⅞ in.)

7 warps per cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City (3872)

PROVENANCE: Ca. 1515, commissioned by Pope Leo X; December 26, 1519, one of seven pieces of the set exhibited in the Sistine Chapel; 1521, listed in an inventory of Leo X's possessions; pawned after the death of Leo X; September 17, 1526, stolen by the Colonna during the sack of the Vatican Palace but returned shortly afterward; May 1527, stolen by imperial troops during the Sack of Rome; acquired by Ferrante Gonzaga along with at least one other piece; hijacked by pirates as it

was in transit to Isabella d'Este; 1528, purchased by Zuanantonio Venier in Venice from a sea captain (along with *Paul Preaching at Athens*), after which it was said to have been seized by pirates and taken to Tunisia; 1554, returned to the Vatican as a gift by Constable Anne de Montmorency (at which time an inscription was added to the border, now missing); after 1554, on regular display in Sistine Chapel for the next two centuries; from the 17th century, among tapestries displayed on



Fig. 83. *The Conversion of Saul*. Preparatory sketch for the tapestry by Raphael, ca. 1515–16. Red chalk on paper, 32.5 x 24.7 cm. Private collection

processional route for the Feast of Corpus Christi; 1798, removed to Paris by Napoleonic troops; 1799, possibly one of the six pieces exhibited in the Musée du Louvre; 1808, returned to the Vatican; since 1814, continuously exhibited in the Vatican; 1932, moved to the Pinacoteca Vaticana.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCES: Dussler 1971, pp. 101–2; Shearman 1972; F. Mancinelli in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco 1982, pp. 53–56; Joannides 1983, pp. 222ff.; Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 264; C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 55, 82, no. 2; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 149; Fermor 1996; Fermor and Derbyshire 1998; Weddigen 1999.

CONDITION: Following the tapestry's return to the Vatican by Constable Anne de Montmorency in 1554, an inscription was added to the border of this panel, now lost, and to *Paul Preaching at Athens*, indicating that Montmorency had acquired them in Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

This tapestry is the sixth in the *Acts of the Apostles*, a set of ten tapestries depicting scenes from the lives of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, commissioned by Pope Leo X in 1515 for the Sistine Chapel. The *Conversion of Saul* is the second of five tapestries dedicated to Paul and follows the *Stoning of*

*Stephen* (Acts 8:1). The tapestry provides a stylistic and thematic counterpoint to the *Charge to Peter* (cat. no. 18), which would have hung on the opposite wall of the chapel. Marked by a calm, frieze-like quality, the *Charge to Peter* emphasizes the psychological drama of the moment; significant movement is limited to a single figure, Christ. The *Conversion of Saul*, on the other hand, is remarkable for its depiction of intense action; men and wheeling horses rush toward or away from the fallen figure of Saul in a dynamic composition that was absolutely revolutionary for tapestry at the time. Together, the scenes represented two crucial moments in the history of the church: the personal selection of Peter and of Paul by Christ; and the revelation to both of Christ's divinity. It was this selection on which claims of papal authority depended. For discussion of the context, patronage, and manufacture of the *Acts of the Apostles* set, see pages 187–203 above.

#### *Description and Iconography*

The tapestry depicts a turning point in the history of the Christian church, the moment when God speaks to the Roman soldier Saul as he travels to Damascus to arrest practicing Christians (Acts 9:1–7). According to the biblical text, after this revelation Saul rose from the ground to discover that he was blind, a blindness that opened his eyes to the truth (*Caecatus illuminatus est*). Recovering his sight, he became a follower of Christ, a protector rather than a persecutor of the Christian church, and its most important missionary, Saint Paul.

Damascus appears at the upper right of the scene in a rugged landscape that extends to a distant vista of snowy mountains, echoing the landscape in the previous panel of the *Stoning of Stephen*. Saul is depicted in the left foreground, lying on his back, his arms upraised in astonishment, as he beholds above him a vision of Christ surrounded by rays of golden light. Christ emerges from a cloud, accompanied by four childlike angels, to gesture forcefully toward Saul, reminiscent of God's gesture to Adam in Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling fresco.<sup>3</sup> It is the moment in the biblical text when Christ asks, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). According to the text, though, Saul does not see Christ, but only hears his voice; Raphael makes the moment of this crucial encounter visual, as had other artists before him.





Detail of cat. no. 23

Saul is bearded and wears the costume of his command as a Roman soldier, an elaborate helmet and a tooled-leather cuirass. Beside him is his sword, which is the instrument of his eventual martyrdom and which becomes his emblem. The careful attention to these garments attests to Raphael's fascination with the artifacts of ancient Rome. Behind Saul, his companions clamor to catch his frightened and fleeing horse. From the right, other soldiers on horseback rush in; the men gesture toward Saul, their mouths wide with shouting; the

animals, sleek and powerful, are quickly reined in, tails flying. In the foreground, a soldier dashes past, brandishing a spear.

The main scene is bordered by a red and gold guilloche frame with a lion's head in each of the four corners. The wide lower border is conceived as a bronze relief with scenes of Saul consenting to the death of Saint Stephen and persecuting Christians, illustrating the biblical text: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3).

A border decorated with a gold and black Greek key pattern is beneath the frieze.

#### *Design and Sources*

Raphael's cartoon for the *Conversion of Saul* has been lost. In 1521 it was recorded as in the collection of Cardinal Domenico Grimani in Venice, apparently acquired very shortly after the set was woven in Brussels. The fact that it was obtained by a collector immediately after the weaving suggests how highly prized Raphael's cartoons were as works of art, independent of

the tapestries.<sup>4</sup> By 1627 the cartoon was apparently in Florence in the collection of Ferdinand II de' Medici.<sup>5</sup> No subsequent documentation has come to light concerning the fate of the cartoon after that time.

However, a drawing that has been identified by scholars as a preparatory sketch for the *Conversion of Saul* is still extant, formerly at Chatsworth (fig. 83). This sheet shows a running figure holding a spear and, behind him, two figures on horseback, a reverse image of the group of rushing figures and horses at the right of the tapestry. Shearman has suggested that the drawing is by Raphael's hand and notes that a stylus was used to map out the composition, a method the artist had used from the start of his career, and that was also used for the extant studies for the *Charge to Peter* (cat. nos. 19, 20).<sup>6</sup> A second drawing with the same image as the Chatsworth sheet (Teyler Museum, Haarlem) was identified by Shearman as a

workshop copy, since it includes even the small pentimenti from the first sheet.<sup>7</sup>

Raphael relied on a number of sources for his design. His main inspiration, identified by Shearman, was an illumination of the *Conversion of Saul* in the Urbino Bible, a manuscript of about 1480 by an unknown Florentine miniaturist (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).<sup>8</sup> As in Raphael's design, this depicts Saul on the ground at the left as he beholds a vision of Christ above him; a Roman soldier with a spear runs in from the right to see what has happened, while other soldiers stand inactive at the far right. Raphael, though, transformed this relatively inactive and calm composition into one of action and excitement. He had already experimented with rushing horsemen and vigorous horses in his fresco the *Repulse of Attila* for the Stanza d'Eliodoro at the Vatican about 1513–14, making use there of his measured drawings of the antique bronze group of the Dioscuri on the Quirinal Hill in

Rome, and of his analysis of Leonardo da Vinci's *Battle of Anghiari* for the Palazzo della Signoria, Florence (destroyed).<sup>9</sup> Relying on his studies of Roman antiquities and on the influence of both Leonardo and Michelangelo (the muscular figures, the gesture of Christ), Raphael blended his various components to create a composition of explosive dynamism and dramatic intensity that was to be immensely influential on Netherlandish tapestry designers such as Bernaert van Orley and Pieter Coecke van Aelst in the succeeding decades.

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1. Shearman 1972, pp. 140–42.
2. Ibid., pp. 140 n. 23, 141.
3. Ibid., p. 121.
4. Fermor 1996, p. 18.
5. Howarth 1994, p. 156.
6. Shearman 1972, p. 101.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 121.
9. Ibid.

## 24.

### *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes*

From a nine-piece set of the *Acts of the Apostles*

Design by Raphael, 1516

Woven in the workshop, or to order, of Jan van Tieghem, Brussels, between ca. 1545 and 1557

Wool and silk

495 x 610 cm (16 ft. 2 1/2 in. x 20 ft.)

8–9 warps per cm

Marks of Jan van Tieghem (top right), the so-called Master of the Geometric Mark (bottom right), and Brussels (bottom left)

Soprintendenza per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico e Demoetnoantropologico di Brescia, Cremona e Mantova (46)

PROVENANCE: 1557, bequeathed to Mantua Cathedral by Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga; 1563, bequeathed by Ercole in his third and final will to his nephew Duke Guglielmo for use in the Basilica Palatina di Santa Barbara; 1569, donated by Guglielmo to the Basilica di Santa Barbara; 1587, used to embellish the facade of Mantua Cathedral on the occasion of the coronation of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga; 1776, moved to the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua.

REFERENCES: D'Arco 1867; Müntz 1878–85, pp. 22, 79; Braghirolli 1881, pp. 4, 27, 28, 30, 32; Müntz 1897, pp. 26–27; Kumsch 1914, p. 47; Luzio 1919; Rusconi 1921; M. Viale in Turin 1952, pp. 48–49, no. 31; White and Shearman 1958, pp. 205–6, 210, 219–20; Schneebalg-Perelman 1972,

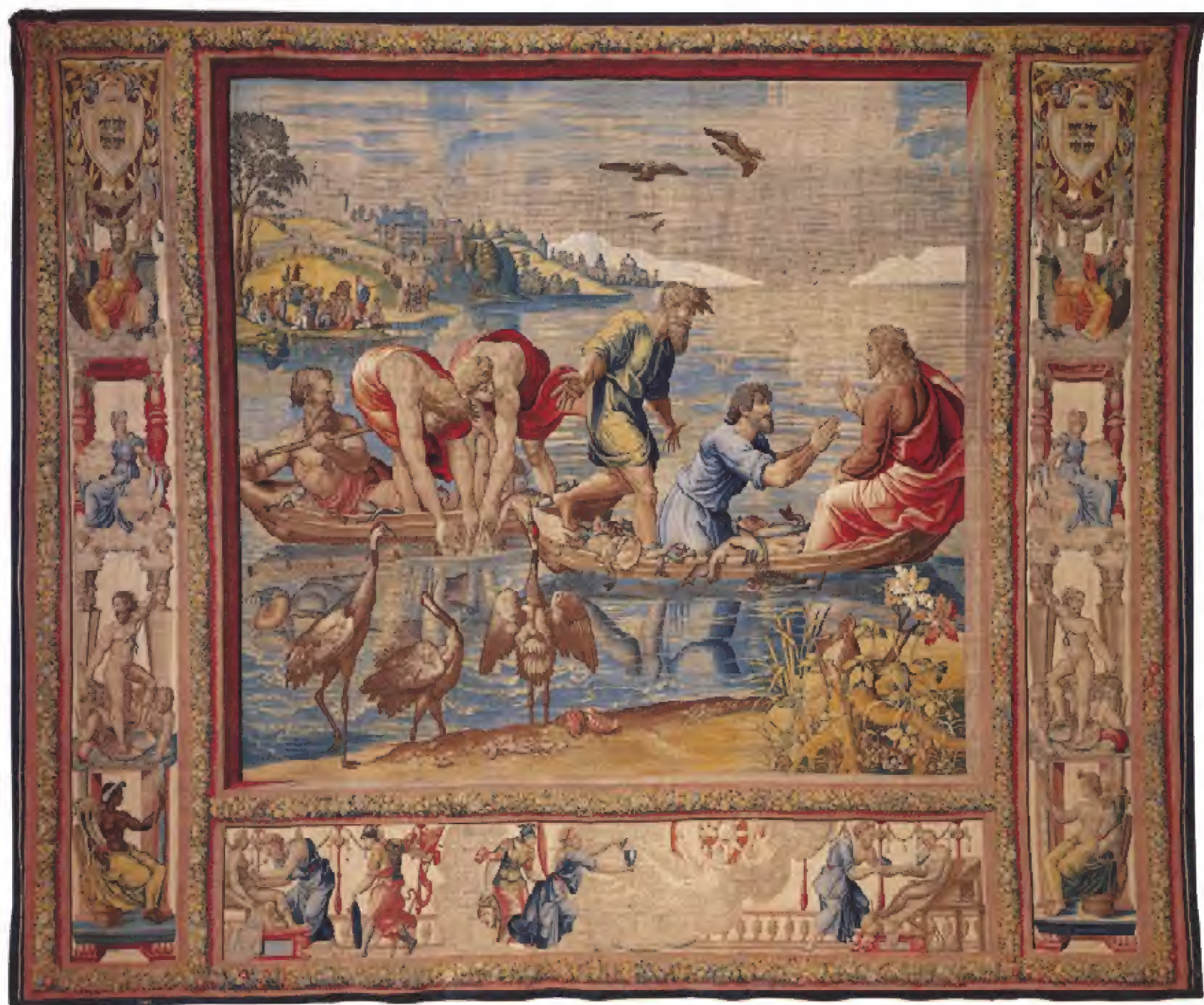
pp. 423–34; Shearman 1972; J. Duverger 1973, p. 76; F. Mancinelli in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco 1982, pp. 53–56; A. Englen in Rome 1984, pp. 144–48, no. 51; Corrain 1986; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 466 (with bibliog.); Pecorari 1989; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 148–57; T. Campbell 1996d; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 142–56.

CONDITION: Good. The lighter spectrum of wools and silks, particularly greens, pinks, and blues, is faded.

This tapestry is one of a set of nine depicting scenes from the lives of Saint Peter and Saint Paul that was acquired before 1557 by Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga. The set is a replica, with some significant variations and lacking the narrow panel of *Paul in Prison*, of the set woven for Pope Leo X for the Sistine Chapel from designs by Raphael (see cat. no. 18). The Leonine set was woven in the workshop of Pieter van Edingen, called van Aelst, between 1516 and 1521. No other weavings are recorded during van Aelst's life, but at least four high-quality reproductions were made during the succeeding thirty years.<sup>1</sup> Production on the first of these appears to have begun almost as soon as van Aelst died

(ca. 1533), for in 1534 Francis I, king of France, made a payment for three tapestries of this design to an agent acting on behalf of the tapestry merchants Daniel and Antoon Bombergen and Willem Dermoyen. This was part of a larger sequence of payments, as evinced by the presence of a complete set of nine pieces (likewise lacking *Paul in Prison*) in French royal inventories. In 1542 Henry VIII, king of England, also took delivery of a nine-piece set. Two other sets were woven in the late 1540s or 1550s: one for Ercole Gonzaga and one for an unidentified member of the Habsburg family (now, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid). The set in the French royal collection was destroyed by revolutionaries in 1797, and that of Henry VIII, in Berlin since the nineteenth century, was destroyed in 1945 (the appearance of the main fields is known from photographs). Inventory descriptions of the lost French and English sets demonstrate that they differed from the original Leonine set in various ways, most importantly, in their side and bottom borders. The Gonzaga and Madrid sets also have these borders, which feature allegorical figures and scenes from classical





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mythology. Thus, apart from the interest of the Gonzaga set in its own right and in the context of Gonzaga patronage, it is of considerable significance for the information it provides regarding the appearance of the versions acquired by the French and English kings.

#### *Description and Iconography*

The *Miraculous Draft of Fishes* is the first in the series and the first among the group of four tapestries dedicated to Saint Peter. It presents a seminal moment in the history of the Christian

church, Christ's selection of the humble fisherman Simon as his first apostle, Peter, and as the cornerstone of the new church (Luke 5:3–11). After a night in which Simon and his companions had caught no fish, Christ told them to pull out into deeper water and cast their nets again. The tapestry depicts the moment after Simon and his accomplice have pulled in their huge catch. His colleague also steps forward, his arms spread wide in astonishment, as Simon falls to his knees beseeching Christ: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

Christ sits calmly at the end of the boat, his hand raised in blessing. The boat is now overflowing with fish, which Shearman has suggested are all varieties of deepwater fish, including garfish and tope, a reflection of the thoughtful approach Raphael took with the details of the narrative.<sup>2</sup>

In the other boat, the fishermen are still hauling in their nets. The muscles of their arms and backs strain against the weight of the load. A third man, seen in profile, balancing the figure of Christ at the far right, steadies





Detail of cat. no. 24

the boat with an oar. With his powerful, nude torso and chiseled features, he recalls ancient Roman sculptures of Neptune and river gods, examples of which were well known in Rome in the early sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The distinctive image of Christ appears to be a "portrait" based on a lost *Vera effigies*, an emerald of antiquity carved with portraits of Christ and Saint Paul, that was known and copied in the late fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

A spectacular panorama extends behind this frieze of heroic figures. At the far right, the subtly shaded waters of the Sea of Galilee meet the blue of the expansive sky, where ravens soar. In the left background, on the shore, is the crowd to whom Christ has been preaching

from Simon Peter's boat. The buildings behind them suggest the cityscape of contemporary Rome and seem to have been selected for their special meaning to Leo X. They include the partly demolished Basilica of Constantine, the newly constructed city wall with its distinctive round towers, and three recently constructed or reconstructed churches: Santa Maria della Pace, Santa Maria del Popolo, and Santo Spirito. The depiction of these particular structures has been interpreted by Shearman as symbolizing the power and succession of the pope.<sup>5</sup> The three cranes in the foreground of the tapestry signify the vigilance, or *custodia*, of the pope; the crane was used as an emblem of papal authority in the early sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Also

in the foreground are a broken tree stump and lush vegetation that do not appear in Raphael's original cartoon (fig. 76) and were presumably added by the Netherlandish artists who painted the working cartoon from which this tapestry was made (see above, p. 193).

#### *Design and Sources*

The moment Raphael chose to represent had few visual precedents, but Shearman has identified one source that Raphael may have known, an eleventh-century Greek gospel that was in the personal library of Leo X.<sup>7</sup> It includes an illumination for the text of Luke that has a similar friezelike arrangement of the two boats and also has standing figures on the shore. In Raphael's



design, the muscular figures had a more contemporary source: Michelangelo's *ignudi* on the Sistine ceiling.<sup>8</sup>

Three drawings relating to the development of the main composition are extant.<sup>9</sup> A rapid sketch now in the Albertina, Vienna (fig. 75) seems to record the moment at which Raphael conceived the principal dramatic components of the scene. The reverse of the Albertina sketch carries a variation of the composition, with the boats shown in the distance greatly reduced in scale, and the foreground populated by figures, including three standing men none of whom appear in the final design. The relationship of this alternative composition to the other drawings remains a matter of discussion.<sup>10</sup> A more finished drawing at Windsor Castle, variously ascribed to Raphael or to Giovanni Francesco Penni, records a later stage in the design process, with the two boats brought closer together for a more friezelike arrangement and with the postures of the figures established. Between this sketch and the final *modello*, Raphael and his assistants may have prepared other detailed studies pertaining to the figures and other elements of the scene. A preparatory drawing of the three cranes (current whereabouts unknown) is assumed to be by Giovanni da Udine, who was celebrated for his skill in rendering animals and grotesques.

Raphael's original cartoon for the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes* is still extant and currently in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig. 76). Analysis by Fermor has revealed detailed underdrawing, visible through infrared reflectography, which demonstrates Raphael's working method as he tried out—and refined—the disposition of the figures and their location.<sup>11</sup> Giovanni da Udine is presumed to have painted the cranes and the fish.

#### The Borders

A garland of fruit and flowers separates the main scene from the wide side and bottom borders. The side borders, mirror images of each other, represent the arms of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, beneath which are four classical gods and goddesses as embodiments of the Elements—Jupiter as Fire, Juno as Air, Neptune as Water, Ceres as Earth. The lower border features a scene from classical mythology, the creation of man by Prometheus, who then stole fire from the gods to protect his fragile creation.

Shearman suggested that the Leonine *Miraculous Draft of Fishes* was originally completed by a side border and that the Four Elements side borders used on the Mantua and Madrid sets (and presumably also on the sets purchased by Francis I and Henry VIII) may well have been made from a design originally conceived and used for the Leonine set.<sup>12</sup> Stylistically, the figures in the borders are homogeneous with those in the five lateral borders extant in the Leonine set, while the thematic link between the Elements and the subject of the *Miraculous Draft* is certainly appropriate. However, as De Strobel has recently remarked, the connection between the two is not absolutely certain, as examination of the Leonine *Miraculous Draft* demonstrates that it has narrow guard bands of blue thread on either side, suggesting that it did not have side borders. This raises the possibility that the Elements border was either woven as a separate strip or attached to another tapestry if it formed part of the original series.<sup>13</sup>

The lower border, like those of the other Mantua panels and the Madrid set, was not part of Raphael's original scheme, which presented scenes from the early life of Leo X and from the life of Saint Paul. The variant lower borders seem to have been designed to accompany the set of the *Acts* woven for Francis I. This is suggested by the depiction of Hercules as the personification of Eloquence in one of them. As Delmarcel has noted, French humanists claimed this personification of Hercules as the prototype for the "Hercules Gallicus," while the Libyan Hercules was associated with Charles V. Whether the whole sequence has an allegorical relationship to the French king is uncertain.<sup>14</sup>

#### Patron

Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga (1505–1563), whose arms are represented in the upper corners of this tapestry, shared his interest in tapestry with his older and younger brothers, Federico II and Ferrante. At Federico's death in 1540, Ercole became regent of the duchy of Mantua during the minority of his nephew Francesco III, in which capacity he took over the patronage of the Mantua workshop that Federico had begun. Subsequently, Ercole spent considerable sums to acquire tapestries of appropriate character for his residence in the Palazzo Vescovile. The inventory taken after his death records more

than 140 tapestries, among which the *Acts* seem to have been the most splendid, aside from the gold-woven *Puttini* set produced in Mantua (see cat. no. 59).<sup>15</sup> The date at which the *Acts* were acquired is not known but it was certainly before 1557, when the set was designated as a gift for Mantua Cathedral in Ercole's will of November 1557. On March 2, 1563, the day before he died in Trent, Ercole instead bequeathed the set to his nephew Guglielmo for use by the new church of Santa Barbara.<sup>16</sup> The set seems to have been purchased from a merchant for whom it had been woven as a speculative venture, since Ercole's arms were added to the tapestries after they were woven (as indicated by the finer warp count in the armorials than in the rest of the field).<sup>17</sup>

The exact circumstances of Cardinal Ercole's acquisition are not known. In the 1550s, he had hopes of a papal crown and just missed election at the 1559 conclave. He went on to become papal legate to the Council of Trent. With its symbolism reinforcing the authority of the pope and church, the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries would have represented the power designated to him by the pope as cardinal and have coincided with his papal aspirations. His decision to transfer the legacy of the set to Santa Barbara reflects the close interest that he took in the planning of this palatine chapel, whose construction was well under way by 1563. In imitation of the Sistine Chapel, it was intended to function as both a private and a public church.<sup>18</sup> In this context, no set of tapestries could have been more appropriate than a reweaving of Raphael's famous *Acts*.<sup>19</sup>

#### Place of Manufacture

The tapestry was manufactured in Brussels and has the BB mark required there after May 1528. The set also has the marks of three workshops; one, composed of the letters IATG, has been identified as that of the Jan van Tieghem workshop. By the early 1550s, van Tieghem's workshop was one of the leading Brussels ateliers, and it is reasonable to suppose that it must have been in production since at least the mid-1540s.<sup>20</sup> Two other marks are as yet unidentified: the monogram FNVG and a geometric device. Recently, Delmarcel has stated that the FNVG is the mark of Frans Ghiecteels, who was the brother-in-law of van Tieghem and may have worked in collaboration with him.<sup>21</sup> The van

Tieghem and FNVG marks also appear on the Madrid set of *Acts*. The consortium of three merchant-weavers whose marks appear on the Mantua *Acts* also played a major part in supplying the large number of Old Testament tapestries made for Sigismund II Augustus of Poland during the late 1540s and early 1550s (see cat. no. 52).

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LORRAINE KARAFEL

1. T. Campbell 1996d, pp. 69–75.
2. Shearman 1972, p. 50.
3. Bober and Rubinstein 1987, pp. 99–102.
4. Shearman 1972, p. 51.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–54.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
7. Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence, MS Plut. vi.23, fol. iii v; Shearman, 1972 p. 118.
8. Fermor 1996, p. 94.
9. Shearman 1972, pp. 94–96; London and other cities 1999, pp. 99–103.
10. London and other cities 1999, pp. 102–3.

11. Fermor 1996, p. 61; Fermor and Derbyshire 1998.
12. Shearman 1972, p. 44.
13. De Strobel in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, p. 543.
14. Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 151–55.
15. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 115–16.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 114–15; Delmarcel in *ibid.*, p. 148.
17. Delmarcel in *ibid.*, p. 148.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Schneebalg-Perelman 1972, pp. 428–34.
21. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 143.

## 25.

### *Christ Carrying the Cross*

(also known as *Lo Spasimo di Sicilia*)

Woven from a cartoon (by Perino del Vaga?) that was copied from a tapestry woven from a cartoon by Raphael's workshop and Giovanni da Udine, ca. 1516–19. Probably woven in Brussels, ca. 1520–30. Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread 183 x 145 cm (72 x 57 in.). 9–10 warps per cm. Fundação Medeiros e Almeida, Lisbon (FMA 1214) (not in exhibition)

**PROVENANCE:** 1688, listed in the inventory of Francesco Maria Balbi; 1892, lent from the collection of Guido Balbi Piovera to the "Mostra d'arte antica," Genoa; Cambiaso collection; Christie's, London, May 13, 1965, no. 117; purchased by Ronald Lee (trade); Fundação Medeiros e Almeida, Lisbon.

**REFERENCES:** Boggero and Simonetti 1983, pp. 148–49; Adelson in Vatican City 1984, pp. 277–80 (with bibliog.); Nesselrath in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, pp. 356, 546–47.

**CONDITION:** Moderate. The lighter spectrum of wools and silks is very faded. Much of the dark thread (for example, around Christ's head) is replacement.

The cartoon from which this tapestry was woven reproduces, on a smaller scale, a painting by Raphael that was commissioned by a rich Palermo lawyer, Giacomo Basilico, for the main altar of the Olivetan church of Santa Maria dello Spasimo in Palermo (fig. 84).<sup>1</sup> It was the second reproduction of this design, a first one having been made for Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi, known as Bibbiena (fig. 85).

#### *Description and Visual Sources*

The main scene represents the apocryphal

moment when Christ, passing his mother on the road to Calvary, stumbles under the weight of the cross that he is being forced to carry by his tormentors. As Ettlinger has noted, the depiction corresponds closely with a description of this meeting in the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (ca. 1410) attributed to Pseudo-Bonaventura: "When, however, outside the gate of the city, at a crossroad, she encountered Him, for the first time seeing Him burdened by such a large cross, she was half dead with anguish and could not say a word to Him; nor could He speak to her; He was so hurried along by those who led Him to be crucified."<sup>2</sup>

Raphael's composition is based in large part on elements derived from contemporary engravings of the same subject by Martin Schongauer, Albrecht Dürer, and Lucas van Leyden.<sup>3</sup> In a pose that Raphael copied from a 1515 engraving by Lucas van Leyden, Christ braces himself against a rock as he turns to look at his mother, who leans forward as if to embrace him one last time (fig. 84). The Virgin is supported in this moment of anguish by Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen, who kneel on either side. The fleeting intensity of the moment is emphasized by the muscular figure of the soldier in the foreground who is about to jerk Christ forward with the rope that is stretched taut over Christ's shoulder. While the precedent for the position and action of this figure is provided by Schongauer's engraving, Raphael has based the anatomy of the figure on a composite of

two antique sculptures of the Dioscuri on the Quirinal Hill, attributed since ancient times to Phidias and Praxiteles.<sup>4</sup> Behind, Simon of Cyrene has stepped forward to help lift the cross, his arm muscles bulging under its weight. He turns to look at the soldier next to him who has shoved his left hand forward to keep the weight of the cross on Christ's shoulders,



Fig. 84. *Christ Carrying the Cross*. Raphael, ca. 1515–17. Oil on canvas, 318 x 229 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid











raising his spear threateningly with his right hand. Behind the foreground tableau, the centurion in charge of the convoy appears among a troop of mounted soldiers who are emerging from the town gates, the foremost of whom carries a Roman standard with the letters S.P.Q.R. (Senatus populusque romanus; the Senate and the People of Rome).

Although the formal elements of Raphael's composition are derived from a variety of sources, they have been transformed by the wholly realistic manner in which they are portrayed and by the intensity of suffering and grief with which the scene is imbued. The effect is achieved through the range of emotions displayed by Christ and the three Marys; through specific details such as the drops of blood and tears on Christ's face and the tears on the Virgin's and women's faces; through the brutal reality of the soldiers; and by incidental details, such as the flag flapping in the wind and the centurion pointing his baton as he gives an order, oblivious to the emotional drama taking place only a few feet away.

#### *Context, Iconography, and Date of Raphael's Painting*

Built between 1508 and 1515, with funding from Giacomo Basilico, the church of Santa Maria dello Spasimo was devoted to the "Spasimo" of the Virgin, an unusual dedication that reflects the contemporary interest among laypeople and confraternities in the emotional experience of the Virgin during the Passion, and the theological debate that this interest had stimulated.<sup>5</sup> Tommaso de Vio, known as Cajetan, one of the leading Dominican theologians of the day and subsequently the master general of the Dominicans and a protégé of Pope Julius II, published a treatise in 1506, *De Spasimo beatae virginis Mariae*, in which he argued that the Virgin cannot have yielded to ultimate despair and fainted ("lo Spasimo") during the Passion—as she was often depicted in devotional images of the time—because of the incorruptibility of her flesh, her presence at the Crucifixion, and the sustaining Grace with which she was blessed.<sup>6</sup> Although this publication did not prevent Basilico's petition for the dedication of his church, the influence of this thinking is readily apparent in Raphael's painting, where the Virgin's waking anguish forms the principal drama of the composition, but in which,

despite the dedication of the church, she is most clearly not fainting.

The conception of Raphael's painting is generally dated about 1515–16, toward the end of the six-year period for which Giacomo Basilico agreed to provide funding for construction of the church—a dating that is confirmed on stylistic grounds. A terminus post quem is provided by the date of 1515, which appears on the Lucas van Leyden engraving from which Raphael drew the figure of Christ, while a terminus ante quem of 1517 is provided by the date of an engraving after Raphael's painting by Agostino Veneziano. Veneziano produced a second edition of his engraving in 1519, which is virtually indistinguishable from the original except for date.<sup>7</sup> The painting was dispatched to Palermo at a date unknown, but its journey was not without incident. Vasari records that following shipwreck near Genoa and subsequent salvage, accounted miraculous by contemporaries, the painting was only delivered to Palermo through papal intervention.<sup>8</sup> It was documented in situ in 1520. Transferred to Santo Spirito in 1573, the painting was sold to Philip IV of Spain in 1661 and is now in the Prado.

#### *The Bibbiena Tapestry: Artists, Date, and Workshop*

The earliest weaving of a tapestry after the Raphael painting was executed for Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi (1470–1520), called Bibbiena, sometime between the conception of Raphael's painting of this subject and the cardinal's death, thus between 1515/16 and 1520.<sup>9</sup> Five years older than Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, Bibbiena had served as his secretary since the 1490s, and following Giovanni's election as Pope Leo X in 1513, he made Bibbiena his treasurer general and then cardinal. As one of Leo's most important advisors, he was portrayed behind his patron in the *Battle of Ostia* fresco (ca. 1515–17; Stanza dell'Incendio, Vatican). Subsequently he acted as papal legate to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in 1516 and as ambassador to King Francis I of France in 1518. Renowned for his wit (he leads the discussion on humor in Baldassare Castiglione's *Il cortegiano*, published in 1528), his close relationship to Leo X was reflected in the way his artistic patronage emulated that of the pope in many respects. Bibbiena was on close terms with Raphael, proposing a marriage between the artist and one of his relatives and

inheriting Raphael's house after the artist's death. He was portrayed by Raphael, and Raphael and his assistants decorated the *stufetta* (bathroom) and *loggetta* of Bibbiena's apartments, located near Leo's own apartments on the third floor of the Vatican Palace, between 1516 and 1519, the subjects apparently chosen by the cardinal himself. The commission for a tapestry version of the *Spasimo* must have been made shortly after Leo's commission to Raphael for the *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons, perhaps when Raphael and his assistants were decorating the *stufetta*. The small dimensions of the tapestry suggest that it was intended as an altarpiece for the cardinal's private chapel, where it appears to have hung on the occasion of the requiem celebrated after his death.<sup>10</sup>

Although the main scene duplicates, on smaller scale, Raphael's painting, the border is an innovation. The scrolling vine and the naturalistic birds—on a ground of gold—are reminiscent of, but somewhat more etiolated than, those that appeared on the carved frame of Raphael's *Santa Cecilia*, painted about 1514 for the chapel of Santa Cecilia in San Giovanni in Monte.<sup>11</sup> The tapestry incorporates Bibbiena's coat of arms in the lower border, and visual plays on the name Dovizi (*dovizia* means abundance): the cornucopia (*corni di dovizia*), with protruding ears of corn in the upper corners, and the strings of pearls flanking the borders. The lyre-playing crickets in the lower corners refer to his love of music. The border design of Bibbiena's tapestry has traditionally been attributed to Giovanni da Udine, because the decorative elements and very naturalistic birds and flowers are similar to those he employed in the Vatican Loggia and the *loggetta* of Cardinal Bibbiena.<sup>12</sup> Nesselrath suggested that the cartoon may have been prepared by two Raphael pupils working together, as was their standard practice in so many other projects, one pupil executing the main scene and Giovanni da Udine the border. As Adelson has noted, the main scene of the Bibbiena tapestry reflects certain changes to the design of the painting, most evidently in the clothes of the figures: the soldier pulling Christ by a rope is depicted in a tunic rather than jacket and trousers, the soldier holding the spear wears a helmet, and Simon of Cyrene has no leggings. But the similarity between the detail and color of the landscapes and the yellow tone of the foreground figures, rare in Netherlandish tapestries,



Fig. 85. *Christ Carrying the Cross*. Tapestry woven from a cartoon here attributed to Perino del Vaga and Giovanni da Udine (after Raphael), ca. 1517–20. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 193 x 158 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

had led Adelson to suggest that the cartoonist was familiar with the original painting or a good copy and not just the engraving. In noting the differences between the painting and the tapestry, Adelson suggested a possible similarity between the figures in the tapestry design and those in certain of the images in the Vatican Loggia, such as the David and Goliath scene, which are attributed to Perino del Vaga (1501–1547) by Dacos.<sup>13</sup> The second tapestry version of this design (cat. no. 25) derived from a Genoese collection and was attributed to Perino at the end of the seventeenth century;

this old attribution lends circumstantial support to Adelson's unproven suggestion.<sup>14</sup>

In view of the close links between Cardinal Bibbiena and Pope Leo X, the fact that the former commissioned his tapestry of the *Spasimo* at the same time that the Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* were being woven for Leo, and because of the high technical quality of Bibbiena's *Spasimo* tapestry, Adelson attributed the manufacture of Bibbiena's weaving to a workshop producing tapestries for Pieter van Aelst, a theory that, although unsubstantiated by any documentation, is highly plausible.<sup>15</sup>

The differences between the costume of the figures in the Raphael painting and those in the tapestry probably reflect alterations made by the cartoonist; nevertheless, another alteration may well derive from the weavers' intervention. As is readily apparent, Bibbiena's tapestry does not reproduce the *chiaroscuro* effect that dramatizes the original painting. The strong contrasts of light and shade that Italian Renaissance artists appreciated so much are technically difficult to reproduce in tapestry and were also avoided in the Netherlandish manufactories because of the difficulties inherent in utilizing very dark wools and silks. Because of the metallic oxide required as a mordant in the production of many brown and black tones, these hues were less stable than those of lighter colors, since the metallic element led to the rapid disintegration of the wool and silk. This factor was evidently long recognized in the Northern weaving industry, with the consequence that dark tones were almost inevitably reproduced with dark blue wool rather than brown and black. This technique was used throughout the fifteenth century, and well into the sixteenth century, although the illusionistic demands placed upon the weavers gradually led to the introduction of a wider and more vulnerable range of tones from the 1520s. The combination of these factors probably accounts for the evident reduction of light-and-shade contrast between Raphael's painting and the tapestry copy made for Cardinal Bibbiena.

#### *The Balbi Tapestry*

The earliest reference to this tapestry, which came to light only in recent years, is in the 1688 inventory of Francesco Maria Balbi (1619–1704). There it is described as a "rappresentante Nostro Signore che va al Monte Calvario, di Raffaello" and attributed to "Perin del Vaga."<sup>16</sup>

The Balbi were an important and rich Genoese family of merchants. Francesco Maria Balbi was the principal inheritor of the estates and belongings amassed during the sixteenth century by his ancestors. The family fortune was established by his great-grandfather Nicolò Balbi (d. 1549), a silk merchant, and it is possible that he was the original owner of this tapestry. The late-seventeenth-century attribution of the cartoon to Perino del Vaga, who worked in Genoa between 1528 and 1538, provides circumstantial support for the idea that the tapestry



arrived in Genoa in a period coinciding with Nicolò Balbi's success. It is to be hoped that further research on the copious archival materials relating to the Balbi family will shed more light on this question.<sup>17</sup>

There are various differences between the Bibbiena and Balbi tapestries that suggest they were not woven from the same cartoon. Quite apart from the fact that the latter omits the coat of arms and corner details that refer to Bibbiena, the border of the Balbi tapestry is in reverse to that of the earlier weaving, whereas the main scene of the tapestry is in the same orientation. As Adelson has suggested, the most probable explanation for this is that the cartoon from which the Balbi tapestry was woven was not the original used for the Bibbiena tapestry, but a copy, made in Italy, from the Bibbiena tapestry itself. While the cartoonist would have had to take pains to reverse the design of the main field to account for reversal in weaving process, he would not have needed to worry so much about

the border, as this was not specific to any particular direction. Traditionally, the execution of this second cartoon has been attributed to Perino del Vaga, on the basis of the fact that he was working in Genoa between 1528 and 1538 and on the basis of the attribution of the design of this tapestry in the Francesco Maria Balbi inventory.

Generally speaking, the reduction in contrast between light and dark begun in the Bibbiena tapestry is even more marked in the Balbi tapestry. Another change that has occurred in the reproduction process—whether because of deficiencies in the cartoon or through the weavers' interpretation—is the diminution of the emotional intensity of the scene. In the original painting and in the Bibbiena tapestry, the Virgin's face expresses both anguish and resignation, while the countenances of her sobbing companions articulate an evocative and moving range of emotions. These subtleties are lost in the Balbi copy, where the faces are less expressive and differentiated.

1. For the Raphael painting, see Dussler 1971, p. 44; H. S. Ettlinger 1982; Quednau 1983, pp. 167–71; Gardner von Teuffel in Vatican City 1984, pp. 272–77 (with bibliog.); and Gardner von Teuffel 1987, pp. 20–24.
2. H. S. Ettlinger 1982, p. 15.
3. Quednau 1983, pp. 167–71.
4. Haskell and Penny 1981, pp. 136–37; Quednau 1983, p. 170.
5. Gardner von Teuffel 1987, pp. 18–23.
6. H. S. Ettlinger 1982; Gardner von Teuffel 1987, pp. 22–24.
7. Gardner von Teuffel in Vatican City 1984, pp. 276–77.
8. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, pp. 357–58.
9. Vatican Museums, Rome, inv. no. 3840; Adelson in Vatican City 1984, pp. 277–80 (with bibliog.); Nesselrath in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, pp. 356, 546–47.
10. Nesselrath in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, p. 547.
11. Dussler 1971, pp. 39–40; Gardner von Teuffel 1987, pp. 4–6.
12. Adelson in Vatican City 1984, p. 278.
13. Dacos 1977, no. XLIII; Adelson in Vatican City 1984, p. 278; Nesselrath in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, p. 546.
14. Nesselrath in Bonn and Vatican City 1999, p. 546.
15. Adelson in Vatican City 1984, p. 278.
16. Boggero and Simonetti 1983, p. 149; Adelson in Vatican City 1984, pp. 278–80.
17. Grendi 1997, pp. 95–133.







# Designs for the Papacy by the Raphael Workshop, 1517-30

The splendor and beauty of the tapestries woven from Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons were immediately recognized by contemporaries, and the success of this commission evidently encouraged Popes Leo X and Clement VII to order other series of tapestry designs in the late 1510s and early 1520s. Yet, while the *Acts* tapestries have survived in their entirety, along with seven of the original cartoons, only one of these other sets survives in an almost complete form (eleven of twelve pieces of the *Life of Christ*), and three other ensembles are known only from preparatory drawings and later copies. This loss, combined with the canonical status to which Raphael's designs have been elevated since the eighteenth century, has tended to obscure the artistic and iconographic importance of the other sets, of which at least two cost much more than the original *Acts*. Although the loss of these sets is a major impediment to investigation, a surprising amount about their appearance can be deduced from the preparatory drawings, cartoon fragments, and later copies. Despite the fact that a number of important studies of these sets have been written, the materials on which they draw are widely dispersed, and the studies themselves are not readily accessible. The goal of this section, therefore, is to introduce the basic evidence regarding these sets as the foundation for further consideration of their stylistic and iconographic significance.

## GROTESQUES OF LEO X (TRIUMPHS OF THE GODS)

The first Raphael-school design we should consider depicted mythological gods in an elaborate grotesque surrounding. The circumstances in which the designs were conceived and the first weaving produced are undocumented, and the earliest extant reference to the set is provided by the 1544 papal tapestry inventory, which describes it as "Panni otto d'oro et seta, grotteschi di diversi colori" (Eight panels in gold and silk, grotesques of various colors), with a total surface area of 630 square ells. The subjects are listed as "la Nave et Trionfo di Venere," the "Forze d'Hercole," "Fortuna," "le sette Muse," "le sette virtù," "le Trionfo di Marte," "del Trionfo di Bacco," "del Arte liberali."<sup>1</sup> The set is listed in similar terms in the

1550, 1555, and 1592-1608 inventories.<sup>2</sup> Then, in the new inventory of 1608 it is listed as "Arazzi otto nominati Grottesche di Leone Xmo" (Eight tapestries called the Grotesques of Leo X).<sup>3</sup> Later inventories add no new information except that of 1644-55, when the set was described as "quali servono in apparar le stanza della Bologna à San Pietro" ([those] which serve to hang in the Bologna apartment at Saint Peter's).<sup>4</sup> The set was hanging in the apartments of Pius V in 1767, but its subsequent fate is unknown.<sup>5</sup> It may have been looted and destroyed by the Napoleonic troops.

Remarkably, despite the evident splendor and scale of this set, it has never been the subject of detailed attention, largely because of the far-flung and relatively little-known materials on which any such study would necessarily be based. Yet the idiosyncratic description in the 1544 inventory does allow for reconstructing the appearance of the set based on sixteenth-century reweavings from the original cartoons and seventeenth-century copies of one of those sets made at the Gobelins Manufactory.

## Reconstruction of the "Grotesques" Series

The earliest reweaving, apparently made from the original cartoons, was a seven-piece set acquired by Henry VIII in 1542, of which two pieces survive at Hampton Court, a *Triumph of Hercules* (cat. no. 26) and a *Triumph of Bacchus* (fig. 87).<sup>6</sup> Three pieces from a later weaving, thought to date from about 1560-70, survive in the Mobilier National in Paris.<sup>7</sup> They carry the mark of Frans Geubels (fl. ca. 1545-85), and they have a floral border rather than the architectural border that surrounded the papal set and Henry VIII's set. One is a duplicate of the *Triumph of Bacchus*; the other two depict the *Triumph of Minerva* (fig. 89) and the *Triumph of Venus* (fig. 88). The last is especially interesting because Venus is depicted in a ship, providing circumstantial evidence that these tapestries were woven from the same cartoons as those used for the papal set.

The three Mobilier National tapestries derive from a seven-piece set of which Louis XIV appears to have acquired three pieces before 1663.<sup>8</sup> The other four pieces of the set were purchased in 1673 at the sale of the goods of Casimir, former king of Poland



Fig. 87. *The Triumph of Bacchus* from Henry VIII's set of the *Triumphs of the Gods*. Tapestry design here attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine, ca. 1517–20, woven in Brussels, ca. 1540–42. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 470 x 745 cm. The Royal Collection, Hampton Court, U.K.



Fig. 88. *The Triumph of Venus* from the *Triumphs of the Gods*. Tapestry design here attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine, ca. 1517–20, woven in the Brussels workshop of Frans Geubels, ca. 1560. Wool and silk, 501 x 739 cm. Mobilier National, Paris





Fig. 89. *The Triumph of Minerva* from the *Triumphs of the Gods*. Tapestry design here attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine, ca. 1517–20, woven in the Brussels workshop of Frans Geubels, ca. 1560. Wool and silk, 497 x 560 cm. Mobilier National, Paris



Fig. 90. *The Triumph of Faith among the Virtues* from the *Triumphs of the Gods*. Tapestry designed by Noël Coypel after a 16th-century tapestry that was woven from a design here attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine, woven in the Gobelins Manufactory, Paris, 1687–1701. Wool and silk, 493 x 503 cm. Mobilier National, Paris



Fig. 91. *The Triumph of Apollo* from the *Triumphs of the Gods*. Tapestry designed by Noël Coypel after a 16th-century tapestry that was woven from a design here attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine, woven in the Gobelins Manufactory, Paris, 1687–1701. Wool and silk, 491 x 578 cm. Mobilier National, Paris

(who had died at the abbey of Saint-Martin de Nevers in 1672). The complete ensemble was titled the *Triumphes des dieux* in the 1675 French royal tapestry inventory, and the subjects were described as the triumphs of Bacchus, Minerva, Mars, Religion, Hercules, Apollo, and Venus.<sup>9</sup> Although four scenes—those of Mars, Religion, Hercules, and Apollo—disappeared at the end of the eighteenth century, their appearance is recorded, at one remove, by copies made of all seven pieces at the Gobelins Manufactory in the late eighteenth century from cartoons painted by Noël Coypel between 1684 and 1695, as noted by Fenaille in his history of the Gobelins Manufactory (see figs. 90, 91).<sup>10</sup> Coypel's cartoons followed the main structure and details of the originals, but he reworked the designs in a manner that would appeal to contemporary taste, prettifying the figures and adding many additional decorative elements.

The Gobelins copies also included an eighth design, which Fenaille titled the *Triumph of Philosophy* and assumed was Coypel's invention.<sup>11</sup> In fact, as Forti Grazzini has recently noted, this assumption is almost certainly erroneous.<sup>12</sup> The stylistic affinity between this design and others in the set, and the number of quotations from the Vatican Loggia and the borders of the *Acts of the Apostles* indicate that Coypel must have executed the cartoon for the eighth panel after the original panel of the papal set (or drawings of it), which was then still at the Vatican.<sup>13</sup> As Forti Grazzini



Fig. 92. View of the Bibbiena *loggetta*, Vatican Palace, Rome

noted, Fenaille's title was also inaccurate, as the scene represents Grammar among the Liberal Arts. Similarly, he noted that the scene traditionally titled the *Triumph of Religion* should more accurately be called *Faith among the Virtues*.<sup>14</sup> Thus, later weavings and copies allow us to identify eight scenes that correspond to the subjects given for the papal set in the 1544 inventory: the Triumph of Venus ("la Nave et Trionfo di Venere"), the Triumph of Hercules ("Forze d'Hercole"), the Triumph of Mars ("le Trionfo di Marte"), the Triumph of Bacchus ("del Trionfo di Bacco"), the Triumph of Minerva ("Fortuna"), the Triumph of Apollo ("le sette Muse"), Faith among the Virtues ("le sette virtù"), and Grammar among the Liberal Arts ("del Arte liberali").

#### Composition, Style, and Designer

With the circumstantial evidence outlined above, we can deduce the general appearance and iconography of the lost papal set of *Grotesques*. Each of the tapestries featured a central god or personification within a decorative gallery, surrounded by appropriate figures from classical mythology and fanciful grotesque decorations. Although the borders of the *Acts of the Apostles* had featured some grotesque and candelabra-like elements, the *Triumphs of the Gods* was the first tapestry series in which the grotesques were applied as an all-over decorative formula. The stylistic links between these designs and other contemporary works of the Raphael school is readily apparent. For example, several of the personifications of the Liberal Arts in the scene of that subject and at least two of the vignettes of Hercules' Labors are copied directly from two of the *Acts* borders. More generally, the compositional device of placing classical gods within whimsical filigree architectural pavilions—obviously inspired by those in the Domus Aurea—is closely related to the decorations in Cardinal Bibbiena's *loggetta*, painted

by the Raphael school in 1517 (fig. 92).<sup>15</sup> Elements in the *loggetta* frescoes that reappear in the *Triumph of Bacchus* design include a figure of Bacchus under a garden pavilion with attendant figures approaching from both sides, beneath an arcade with an upper awning.<sup>16</sup> The figure of Bacchus in the tapestry, although altered, also demonstrates the designer's awareness of Sansovino's sculpture of Bacchus (executed in Florence in 1511–12 for Gherardo Bartolini and installed in his garden in 1519) or of its classical prototype (which was in the Villa Farnesina in the seventeenth century).<sup>17</sup>

The design of the tapestry series has generally been attributed to Giovanni da Udine on the basis of Vasari's remark that this specialist in still lifes and decorative work had "also executed the cartoons for some tapestries full of grotesques, which are in the first rooms of the Consistory."<sup>18</sup> As Vasari had met Giovanni in March 1550, when the latter was taking part in a Jubilee-year pilgrimage to Rome, and as Vasari's *Lives* project was already well under way, we may assume that information he provided about this artist was based on the artist's own account. The attribution is certainly supported by the close formal and stylistic links that the tapestry designs share with the stucco and painted decorations Giovanni executed in the Bibbiena *loggetta*, in the Sala dei Pontifici, and at the Villa Madama in the early 1520s.<sup>19</sup>

Other artists who must almost certainly have been involved were Giovanni Francesco Penni and Perino del Vaga. We know from Vasari's *Lives* that Penni assisted Raphael with the borders of the *Acts of the Apostles*. As a number of the figures from those borders reappear in the main field of the *Grotesques* tapestries, and as they are stylistically indistinguishable from many of the other figures, it seems reasonable to suppose that Penni was responsible for a number of these. Perino del Vaga's involvement is also suggested by his collaboration with Giovanni da Udine on the ceiling of the Sala dei Pontifici in the late 1510s. And in light of the way so much of Penni's work seems to have been based on compositional sketches by Raphael and Giulio Romano, we might also suspect that Giulio played a part in the conception of some of the figural groups.

#### Patron, Iconography, and Use

The fact that the set was described as the "Grottesce di Leone Xmo" in the 1608 Vatican inventory led Müntz and many subsequent writers simply to assume that the set was designed for this pope. The close relationship between the style of the tapestry designs and that of the decorations that Giovanni da Udine and his colleagues executed for Bibbiena and Leo between 1517 and 1519 and in the Villa Madama in 1520 certainly appears to support this theory, but the lack of documentation for the set leaves open the possibility that it could have been conceived after Clement's



election in November 1523. Here, however, the iconography of the set may provide us with circumstantial evidence.

As noted above, several of the figures in the *Grotesques* are copied verbatim from those in the borders of the *Acts of the Apostles*, along with accompanying decorative elements. Shearman's study of the *Acts* suggested that the borders embodied some sort of allegorical celebration of Leo X and that the key to this interpretation was provided by vignettes of Hercules, which appear to have been included because Hercules was taken as a prototype for Leo X in the commentaries and panegyric texts published during his pontificate.<sup>20</sup> As Forti Grazzini has recently observed, Shearman's discussion of the figure of Hercules in the *Acts* border probably holds the key to a fuller understanding of the iconography of the *Grotesques* set, which included a panel devoted exclusively to the *Triumph of Hercules* (cat. no. 26).<sup>21</sup> The obvious resonance of the *Triumph of Hercules* panel for Leo, and the recurrent appearance of lions throughout the tapestries suggest that this series was, indeed, conceived and woven for Leo, rather than for Clement. Although the complex scenes require detailed elucidation, it seems likely that the series embodied a broad meditation on the trials and achievements of Leo's reign and carried the implicit suggestion that this reign had resulted in the establishment of a new era of spiritual and intellectual harmony, as demonstrated by the scenes *Faith among the Virtues* and *Grammar among the Liberal Arts*.

The location for which the *Grotesques* were intended is uncertain. Vasari stated that they were hung in the first rooms of the Consistory ("prime stanze del Concistoro").<sup>22</sup> As consistorial meetings seem to have taken place in a variety of locations during the first half of the sixteenth century, this information is ambiguous. One intriguing possibility is that the *Grotesques* were intended for the Sala dei Pontifici, which is a large room immediately below the Sala di Costantino and which was certainly used for papal consistories under Leo's predecessors and successors and, in all likelihood, under Leo himself. It was, as well, a setting for feasts and other ceremonies.<sup>23</sup> Use of the room during Leo's reign was interrupted by the need to replace the ceiling, work that was effected during 1518–19.<sup>24</sup> According to Vasari, the grotesque paintings and stucco decoration of the new ceiling were undertaken by Perino del Vaga and Giovanni da Udine.<sup>25</sup> The ceiling was completed in fall 1520.<sup>26</sup> The decorative scheme combines Leo's horoscope, represented by the planets and signs of the zodiac, and, in the central tondo, a celebration of papal dominion as symbolized by the four winged figures who hold the papal tiara and keys.<sup>27</sup> The *Grotesques* tapestries would obviously have been stylistically and iconographically appropriate beneath this display of papal power presiding over the constellations. Considering the coincidence between the

date of replacement and decoration of the ceiling in this room and the date suggested here for the design and execution of the tapestries, the possible relationship between the two ensembles calls for further investigation.

### *The Cartoons*

If the *Grotesques* were designed for Leo X this raises a further question. The *Acts* cartoons were painted in Rome, but the cartoons for the next papal commission for which we have evidence, the *Giochi di putti*, were executed in Brussels by Tommaso Vincidor (known as Bologna), who was sent there for that purpose in June 1520. Were the *Grotesque* cartoons also executed in Brussels, and if so when?

Vincidor makes no mention of the *Grotesques* in a letter he sent to Leo on July 20, 1521, regarding the tapestry designs on which he was then engaged (see below). Were they already completed, or does his silence indicate that he played no part in their production? While answers to these questions can only be speculative, certain characteristics of the tapestries themselves suggest a probable answer. In view of the stylistic similarity of the borders of the *Acts* and the figures and designs of the *Grotesques*, it seems logical to assume that the idea for the latter developed from the former. As the last of the *Acts* borders must have been completed by the beginning of 1517, the period in which the Raphael workshop was also executing Cardinal Bibbiena's *loggetta*, it seems reasonable to suggest that the *Grotesques* may have been conceived during the period 1517–18 and executed between 1519 and 1521. The iconographic scheme is complex and would have taken some time to work out. Furthermore, because the figures of the *Grotesques* tapestries appear stylistically close to those of the *Acts* borders, it seems reasonable to ask whether the cartoons could have been painted in Rome by Raphael's assistants in the period following the completion of the *Acts* cartoons. Given the extraordinary originality and novel coloration of the *Grotesques* designs, it is unlikely that these cartoons were executed in Brussels.

### *Workshop*

Although the workshop in which the *Grotesques* tapestries were made is undocumented, all the other papal commissions during the 1510s and 1520s for which we have evidence were undertaken by Pieter van Aelst. It was almost certainly to this merchant that the *Grotesques* cartoons, too, were consigned.

### GIOCHI DI PUTTI

If the *Grotesques* are undocumented and the date of conception a matter of conjecture, we are better informed about the next

commission that Pope Leo X instigated, a twenty-piece set known as the *Giochi di putti* that depicted children at play and devices symbolic of his rule against a rich ground of gilt-metal thread.<sup>28</sup> The earliest reference to this set is in the letter sent by Vincidor, in Brussels, to Leo on July 20, 1521.<sup>29</sup> Relatively little is known of Vincidor. Vasari records him as a pupil of Raphael, and he is first documented in Rome in January 1517, when he witnessed Raphael's signature.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, he was among the artists who worked on the Vatican Loggia frescoes, where his hand has been tentatively identified in some of the scenes.<sup>31</sup> On May 21, 1520, the pope provided him with a letter of safe conduct for a mission to Flanders, where he must have arrived some weeks later. There he was among the artistic community with which Dürer exchanged prints and drawings in Brussels in September and October 1520 (as recorded in Dürer's daybook). In April 1521, Vincidor made a portrait of the German master (lost, but known from a later copy by Willem van Haecht), and the influence of Dürer's engravings is apparent in various motifs that Vincidor introduced into the *Giochi di putti* designs.<sup>32</sup>

Vincidor's July 20, 1521, letter to Leo describes his progress on two separate ensembles of tapestry cartoons, one for a set of wall hangings, the other for a ceremonial bed.<sup>33</sup> Regarding the first—larger—project, he stated that he had completed twenty tapestry cartoons of “bigarie de putini” and the pope's *imprese*, which he had elaborated from the initial conception in the most inventive way.<sup>34</sup> Although brief, the description of the designs allows us to identify them as the cartoons for a twenty-piece set of tapestries listed in the 1544 papal inventory as “twenty panels of gold and silk with putti playing.”<sup>35</sup> From that point on, the set appears regularly in papal inventories with, from 1644, an attribution of the design to Raphael.<sup>36</sup> At least twelve pieces were still hanging in the apartments of Pius V (divided among three rooms) in 1750.<sup>37</sup> The subsequent fate of the set is unknown.<sup>38</sup> It is conceivable that the tapestries were looted by Napoleonic troops and destroyed for their gold thread.<sup>39</sup>

The appearance of the set can be reconstructed on the basis of sixteenth-century engravings, preparatory drawings, and eight later tapestries.<sup>40</sup> This exercise depends, in the first place, on a series of four engravings by the Master of the Die (fl. 1532–50), which, in a second edition, were published as the invention of Raphael (RAPHAEL.VR.IN) and, in a third edition of 1602, appeared with the additional information that they represented the “Tapezzerie del Papa” (fig. 95).<sup>41</sup> The information provided by these engravings can be supplemented by a group of at least twelve preparatory sketches and *modelli* distributed in collections around Europe, of which ten are dated 1521 and six carry Tommaso Vincidor's cipher

composed of the letters F[ECIT] T[OMMASO] B[OLOGNA]. In addition, the designs of some of the engravings and preparatory sketches are duplicated in eight tapestries that appear to be seventeenth-century copies of the lost Leonine tapestries (see cat. no. 27). All these designs show children playing with animals and various objects in a shallow space in front of rich swags of fruit and leaves.

### *Conception and Design*

In his letter to Leo, Vincidor claimed to have executed all the designs for the series, as well as many of the cartoons; Vasari, however, ascribed the designs to Giovanni da Udine, noting the importance of the garlands and animals and that these were among Giovanni's specialities.<sup>42</sup> Since Vasari was familiar with the tapestries at the Vatican and knew Giovanni da Udine personally and since a number of the motifs in the tapestries reappear in a putto-and-garland frieze generally attributed to Giovanni's hand at the Villa Madama (the so-called Giulio Romano room), there is reason to suppose that Vasari's attribution was based on some element of fact.<sup>43</sup>

Although the preparatory drawings for the tapestry designs fall into two distinctive groups—one is on gray-brown prepared paper and the other on a paper prepared with a lighter brown—examples from both groups carry Vincidor's cipher, and none of the drawings is readily identifiable as by Giovanni da Udine. His role may therefore have been limited to the development of the compositional formula and the execution of a series of preliminary sketches, now lost, from which Vincidor subsequently prepared more finished models.<sup>44</sup> The purpose of these two groups of drawings, which in a number of cases duplicate the same image, is unclear (figs. 94, 104). It is possible that one group represents copies of the designs that Vincidor prepared for Leo, while the other drawings were prepared as more finished *modelli* for use in the preparation of the cartoons. Further complicating the matter is the fact that many of the figures that appear in the *modelli* correspond to figures in two chiaroscuro woodcuts by the Master NDB depicting playing children, of which a version of one, dated 1544, carries Raphael's “invenit,” implying that both engravings were done after drawings (now lost) by Raphael (fig. 93).<sup>45</sup> Because mid-sixteenth-century editions of engravings after four of the tapestries also carried Raphael's name and since Raphael was alive and well when Vincidor left Rome, it seems plausible that he could have been involved in the conception of the *Giochi di putti* series. The woodcuts by Master NDB may record an initial idea that was abandoned in favor of the friezelike composition embodied in the final design but that, nonetheless, provided the basis for many of the figures in the compositions of Giovanni da Udine and Tommaso Vincidor.



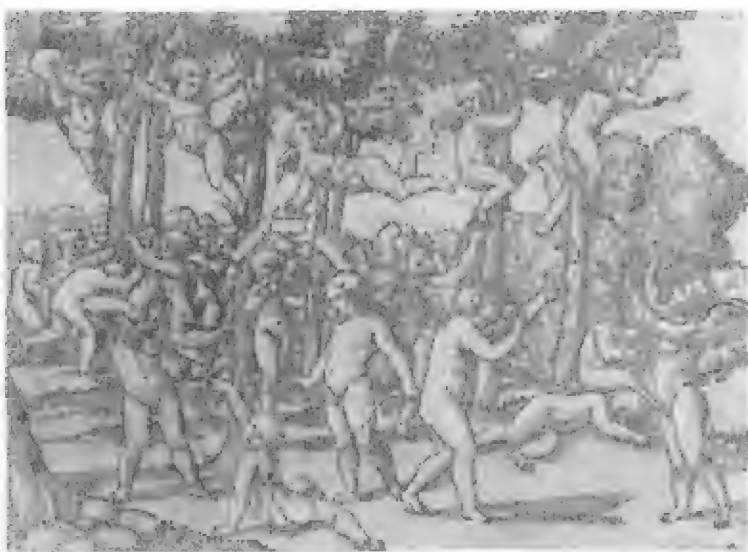


Fig. 93. *Putti Playing*. Master NDB after Raphael, 1544. Chiaroscuro woodcut, 28.6 x 39.2 cm. The British Museum, London

From this evidence it seems probable that, in addition to any written instructions which Vincidor carried with him to Brussels in May 1520, he must also have taken a number of preliminary designs for the tapestries and perhaps some completed *modelli* as well. It is unclear why Vincidor was dispatched to Brussels to execute the cartoons, but considering the number of projects on which the Raphael workshop was then engaged, it may have been in order to take advantage of the cartoon specialists working in Brussels. Vincidor's letter to Leo explicitly states that he has not been able to paint all the cartoons himself, and analysis of cartoon fragments from the set of the *Life of Christ* woven during Clement VII's pontificate, discussed below, certainly suggests that the cartoons for this set were executed in Brussels by Vincidor in conjunction with at least two Netherlandish assistants.

#### *Composition and Iconography*

If the Raphael playing children in the Master NDB woodcuts do represent an initial concept for the *Giochi di putti* commission, the tapestry series as it was developed differs markedly from that source. From a formal point of view, the landscape setting was abandoned for shallow niches that are largely occupied by heavy swags of fruit and leaves, a crowded stage for the children and animals populating the scenes. This formula was inspired by the friezes that appeared in a group of antique sarcophagi (known as "garland sarcophagi"), which feature putti and garlands in exactly this form. Several examples are documented in Rome in the early sixteenth century, including ones that Raphael and Giovanni da Udine would certainly have known on the grounds of the Villa Madama and on the Monte Cavallo.<sup>46</sup>

The iconographic point of departure for both the lost Raphael drawings and the *Giochi di putti* was the *Eikones (Imagines)* of Philostratus, which purports to describe a collection of sixty-four paintings displayed in Naples in the third century A.D. One of these works was said to depict cupids (erotes) playing in a fruit garden, laughing, dancing, flying, fighting, kissing, and throwing apples at one another (book 1.6).<sup>47</sup> Raphael's interest in this subject is demonstrated by a drawing made as early as 1507 (it may have been rekindled in 1517 when the duke of Ferrara planned to decorate his Camerino d'Alabastro with a representation of this subject, which was eventually executed by Titian).<sup>48</sup>

The iconography of the Leonine *Giochi di putti* tapestries has yet to be analyzed in full detail, but Quednau has published important preliminary work.<sup>49</sup> As he has demonstrated, some of the scenes reveal an explicit debt to Philostratus. For example, a drawing now in Budapest (Szépművészeti Múzeum) shows a putto throwing an apple out of an apple tree while, below, others collect and eat the apples. Two other details described by Philostratus, putti wrestling and putti chasing a hare, are also featured in the tapestries.<sup>50</sup> Other scenes have a more specific reference to the patron. The general appropriateness of the subject is readily evident. The classical gods of love form a playful analogy for the Christian virtue of Charity, which Leo, as Christ's representative on earth, was responsible for promoting through the Catholic Church, a cause with which he particularly identified himself through his support in 1519 of the Sodalitas Caritas, the Company of Divine Love.<sup>51</sup> Within this broad metaphor the series presents a multiplicity of allegories and visual puns on Leo's personal history, the virtues he embodied, the relationship between spiritual and secular power, and his papal responsibilities. For example, one of the woven copies of the original series, now in Budapest (Iparművészeti Múzeum), shows a putto playing with a yoke; the yoke, combined with the motto *SUAVE*, was one of the devices that Leo had adopted in 1512 after the restoration of the Medici to Florence, to show the city that his reign would be "clemente et suave" (merciful and gentle).<sup>52</sup>

Two other scenes made explicit reference to Leo as Christ's representative on earth. In one, recorded both in preliminary drawings and in one of the seventeenth-century copies (cat. no. 27), the young lion is now an adult, weaving a crown that signifies he is king of the animals. This is probably an allusion to the argument presented in Leonine panegyric that Leo was the fulfillment of Revelation 5:5, which prophesies the victory of the lion from the root of Jesse.<sup>53</sup> The lion is flanked by putti carrying the insignia of the temporal and spiritual worlds, the imperial crown and scepter and the papal tiara and keys, indicating the pope's authority over



Fig. 94. *Three Putti under the Sign of the Lion*. Tommaso Vincidor, ca. 1520. 20.4 x 29.9 cm. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest



Fig. 95. *Three Putti under the Sign of the Lion*. Master of the Die, ca. 1532–50. Engraving, 21.6 x 28.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.97.331)

both realms. This theme was developed further in another of the lost tapestries, known from a *modello* (Kunstbibliothek, Berlin, HdZ 4327), a contemporary copy of the same (fig. 94), an engraving (fig. 95), and one of the seventeenth-century tapestries (whereabouts unknown).<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the panel with the crowned lion and this piece may have been intended to hang at a focal point of the room. The second piece depicts a crowned putto standing with his foot on an orb, beneath the astrological symbol of the lion that appears in the center of the sun. Quednau suggests that this was probably intended as a symbol of “Sol Iustitiae Christus” and, by implication, of Leo, his vicar on earth. In one hand the putto holds the temporal scepter and in the other the papal keys, again representing the papal doctrine of the Two Swords. He is flanked by the eagle and phoenix, symbols associated with the return of the golden age, represented here by the two putti who approach from either side, bearing chargers laden with gold, to signify the Obolus of Saint Peter (the annual presentation of monies to the pope, which were intended to fund his “carità”).<sup>55</sup> As Quednau observes, the idea that with Leo’s election a new golden age had dawned was a central tenet of Leonine panegyric. Andreas Fulvius, for example, hailed it as “nunc aurea conditur aetas” (the founding of a golden age in the present day) in his “Sanctissimo Patri Leoni X. Pont. Max. Panegyricus,” in the *Carmina illustrium poetarum italorum*.<sup>56</sup>

The concept of a golden age derived from Greek mythology. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* described four previous races of people, of which the earliest was the Golden Race. Ruled by Kronos (Saturn), father of Zeus, members of this race never grew old, did not work, and passed their days in amusement. They were succeeded by less

perfect races, those of Silver, Bronze, and Iron, all ruled by Zeus, to the last of which Hesiod belonged, a time of decline. Plato also discussed the notion of a Golden Race in his *Politikos*, along with the concept of successive periods or races which, when the worst is reached, gradually return to a more ideal situation. These ideas were adopted in Roman literature, particularly by the writers who flourished under the patronage of the emperor Augustus—Ovid, Horace, Propertius, and Livy. Virgil’s *Fourth Eclogue*, which spoke of the dawn of a new golden age marked by the birth of a child, was interpreted by such Christian writers as Boethius and recognized by Constantine the Great as an announcement of Christ. The Christianization of the golden age myth was perpetuated by the medieval *Ovide moralisé* and by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. In the poet’s journey through Purgatory, the Roman poet Statius tells Dante and Virgil that the golden age of the ancient poets was the Terrestrial Paradise.

During the fifteenth century the Medici adapted the concept of the golden age for their own purposes. Writers in the circle of Lorenzo the Magnificent, such as Marsilio Ficino, lauded their patron as the instigator of a new golden age in Florence. The conceit was transferred to the papal court when Lorenzo’s son Giovanni became Pope Leo X in 1513. According to Vasari, a procession in Florence celebrating his election included seven chariots of which the first represented the age of Saturn. This was followed by five chariots populated with historical personages and, finally, by a seventh chariot that signified the end of the iron age and the revival of the golden age, which was reborn through the election of the pope. During the 1510s the works of Baldassare



Castiglione (*Il libro del cortegiano*; written 1508–18, published 1528) and Niccolò Machiavelli (*Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, 1517) furthered the notion of the golden age as an ideal political state, achievable through good government.<sup>57</sup> The references to a golden age in the *Giochi di putti* tapestries were thus of great resonance for Leo and his contemporaries. The implicit suggestion of a return of the golden age was given explicit physical expression by the extraordinary density of gold with which the original Leonine tapestries were woven.

#### Location

Vincidor's letter to Leo states that the *Giochi di putti* tapestries were intended for the room in which his colleagues "Zulio" (Giulio Romano) and "Ian Frantiecho" (Giovanni Francesco Penni) were working, presumably the Sala di Costantino whose decorations had been assigned to these artists following Raphael's death. The circumference of this room is approximately 60 meters, and assuming that the Leonine tapestries were approximately the same width as the seventeenth-century copies (about 270 cm), the total length of the set would indeed have provided a complete all-around decoration for the room, allowing for entrances and windows. As each of the Leonine tapestries was said to contain 17½ square ells, it would appear that they would have extended a little above the height of the *basamento* (lower level) of the room, which is 230 centimeters high.<sup>58</sup>

The Sala di Costantino was used for banquets and semipublic audiences. The ceiling decorations incorporate the motif of the yoke, a device of Leo X, resting on a stucco frieze. Below, the frescoes show scenes that celebrate divine providence and the God-given authority of popes, as embodied in a cycle of papal and saintly portraits, combined with allegorical personifications, and, below that, four episodes from the life of Constantine, depicted as *trompe l'oeil* tapestries.<sup>59</sup> Although the fresco decorations were only completed under Clement, the scheme was devised under Leo—hence the appearance of his devices, such as the yoke.<sup>60</sup> The subtext of the tapestries, particularly the celebration of papal jurisdiction over the temporal as well as the spiritual world, was altogether appropriate in the context of this room's secondary use as a banqueting hall where the pope would have received and entertained both secular and ecclesiastical guests. The same theme was echoed in the history frescoes and *trompe l'oeil* sculptures of emperors and rulers in the Stanza dell'Incendio.<sup>61</sup>

#### Workshop

Leo's letter of safe conduct to Flanders for Vincidor is dated May 21, 1520. On June 27 of the same year, Leo entered into a contract

with Pieter van Aelst whereby the merchant-weaver agreed to work for the pope for the following three years.<sup>62</sup> The total cost of the work was to be 17,600 ducats, to be paid in monthly installments of 100 ducats. Eighty percent of the cost—14,000 ducats—was to be paid to Jacopantonio Busini and Jacopo Strozzi for 1,400 pounds of gold thread. If this expense was related to the *Giochi di putti* set then it would suggest a cost per tapestry of 880 ducats a piece. Although the dimensions of each tapestry were relatively modest, this figure seems plausible considering the inordinate amount of gold thread required for the ground of each tapestry (and in comparison with the presumed cost of the *Acts of the Apostles* and the documented cost of the *Life of Christ* tapestries, for which, see below). On these grounds, it seems likely that the contract was related to the production of the *Giochi di putti* design.<sup>63</sup> Since Leo died in 1521, the weaving must have been completed under Clement VII.

#### THE PAPAL "LETTO DE PARAMENTO"

Besides providing information about the *Giochi di putti* cartoons, Vincidor's letter to Leo of July 20, 1521, also describes another project on which he was working, the fourth, but least well known, of the major tapestry commissions that Leo X instigated before his death in December 1521. This was the preparation of the cartoons for what Vincidor describes as a "storie del leto," of which one panel was to depict Leo X in a scene of the Nativity along with Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (later Pope Clement VII) and Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo. Vincidor requested that copies of the portraits of Leo and Cardinal Medici in a painting by Raphael then in Florence might be sent to him so that he could finish the cartoon. The painting in question was the famous group portrait with Leo, Giulio de' Medici, and Cardinal Rossi (Uffizi, Florence). Rossi had died in 1519, which explains why he was replaced with Cardinal Cibo (Leo's nephew and a close associate of Leo and Giulio de' Medici at the time). Vincidor was clearly reiterating an earlier request, as he commented that if he had received what he had already asked for, he would have finished the design by now.<sup>64</sup>

Although the *letto* (a ceremonial bed that figured in the robing ceremony that preceded consistories) has not survived, Vincidor's letter provides enough information for us to identify it in subsequent papal inventories.<sup>65</sup> From these we know that it was woven in wool, silk, and gilt-metal thread and that it consisted of four main components: a *sopracielo* (canopy) depicting the Trinity, measuring 30 square ells; a *lato* (side panel), described variously as the *Visitation of Saint John* and the *Visitation of Saint Elizabeth*, measuring 27¼ square ells; a *capo* (head piece) showing the Nativity, which also included the figure of Saint John and a portrait of Leo X,

measuring 25 square ells; and a *coperta* (cover) with the arms and device of Clement VII, measuring 17¼ square ells. In addition there were a number of smaller valance components, six sections of vertical hangings, and seven for the canopy woven with various "Figure."<sup>66</sup> According to the 1592–1608 inventory, the two side panels were woven with the arms of Leo X, but this may have been a misidentification since the same inventory confuses Leo's arms with those of Clement VII in a description of a throne canopy that has survived at the Vatican (see below).<sup>67</sup> Because Leo died on December 1, 1521, a number of writers have assumed that the panel with Leo would not have been woven.<sup>68</sup> However, any doubt is removed by the listing in the 1608 inventory, which describes the panel as "Arazzo uno piccolo con la Natività del Signore, San Gio: San Girolamo et Papa Leone" (A small tapestry with the Nativity of Our Lord, Saint John, Saint Jerome [probably a misidentification of the figure of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici], and Pope Leo).<sup>69</sup> The ensemble was variously described as a "letto de paramento del Consistorio," a "letto del Concistorio," and a "letto del Concistoro secreto." The side hangings seem to have been separated from the canopy in the early years of the seventeenth century, but they continued to be recorded as separate items in subsequent inventories and at least part of the ensemble appears to have survived in use well into the eighteenth century. According to Taja's 1750 description of the Vatican Palace, an old tapestry with the Nativity scene was still hanging in the chamber used by popes prior to the robing ceremony. Taja attributed the design to Raphael.<sup>70</sup>

The ensemble disappeared from papal records in the late eighteenth century, but its appearance can be reconstructed, in part, on the basis of the descriptions cited above. A drawing, the *Adoration of the Infant Jesus with Pope Leo X* (cat. no. 28), was identified by Fischel in 1934 as the *modello* for the cartoon that Vincidor described in his 1521 letter.<sup>71</sup> The center of the composition is occupied by the Virgin, who is delicately removing a cover from the infant Jesus. Saint Elizabeth and Saint Joseph kneel in the right foreground as the infant Saint John advances across the foreground toward the crib in which Jesus lies. The Christ child looks up into the face of the patron, Leo, who kneels in the left foreground of the scene, the papal tiara in front of him. Another cleric—possibly Sixtus IV—is kneeling behind; behind him, in turn, stand a cardinal and another bearded man. Although the features of the standing men are not exactly those of Cardinal Cibo and Cardinal Medici, it is possible that these figures represent Vincidor's approximations of their appearance before the arrival of the Raphael copies that he had requested. The figures at the left of the composition are balanced on the right by a group of shepherds who lean forward over the broken wall that encircles the

foreground space. Above, the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove within an aura, the principal light source in the scene. It is flanked by pairs of angels playing instruments while a winged cherub hovers above.

As with the *Giochi di putti* designs, Vincidor's sources are readily apparent, indicative of the cut-and-paste technique in which he seems to have worked. The Virgin and child enclosed by broken architecture are based on a Raphael composition known from a rapid sketch (Ashmolean, Oxford) that has been dated on stylistic grounds to 1508–9 and was evidently known, and followed, by a number of artists in Raphael's circle.<sup>72</sup> A more finished drawing by an unidentified hand using the same composition (Louvre) may record a lost drawing by Vincidor or another Raphael pupil that served as the more direct source for the lower part of Vincidor's design.<sup>73</sup> The concept and outermost angels in the upper part of the design derive from a drawing of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, which is attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni (Louvre).<sup>74</sup>

Although Fischel's identification of the Louvre *modello* provided the most direct testimony that had yet emerged regarding the appearance of the *letto*, his article also became something of a hindrance to further research as he was unaware of the inventory descriptions for the rest of the ensemble. Because subsequent writers have tended to use his article as their principal source on this subject, many have assumed that the *letto* was never executed.<sup>75</sup> However, as we have seen, that was not the case, and in a recent study, the present writer demonstrated that the inventory descriptions do provide clear evidence that all the components were indeed woven. Furthermore, this study suggested that the appearance of the canopy, and perhaps of the side panel as well, may be accounted for by two cartoons in the collection of the duke of Buccleuch (fig. 96). Little known before their publication by Jaffé in 1992, no evidence had previously emerged explaining the purpose and context in which these were created, and they have yet to receive detailed stylistic analysis.<sup>76</sup> Executed in body color and chalk on paper (mounted on canvas at an unknown date), traces of pigment indicate that both were originally colored, at least in part, but that the paint has been unusually fugitive; as a result both cartoons now appear in sepia tones.

One cartoon depicts God the Father supported by the symbols of the four Evangelists as described in the Vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:4–28). The design reproduces the principal scene of a small oil painting now in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, which is generally thought to have been painted by Raphael about 1518.<sup>77</sup> Although the subject of the painting is made clear by the small figure of Ezekiel in the lower left, this prophet was excluded from the cartoon, which could explain why it was identified as the Trinity in



Fig. 96. *The Vision of Ezekiel*. Tommaso Vincidor and assistants after Raphael, 1521. Body color and chalk on paper mounted on canvas, 380 x 368 cm. Boughton House, by kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury, K.T.



the Papal inventories. The design of this cartoon certainly seems well suited for use as a canopy, and its dimensions correspond to those of the canopy listed in the Vatican inventories.<sup>78</sup> Circumstantial evidence that this was indeed its function is provided by the fact that a canopy of the same design was supplied to Francis I during the 1530s and that it seems to have been used in association with Francis's set of the *Acts of the Apostles*. The French wardrobe officers made an identical misidentification of the subject as the Trinity.<sup>79</sup>

Identifying the purpose of the second Boughton House cartoon is more problematic. The drawing depicts the Holy Family with Saint Elizabeth, Saint Joseph, the young Saint John, an angel, and two attendant women, with two male onlookers—an adaptation with variations of the painting of the same subject that Raphael created as a gift for Lorenzo de' Medici, duke of Urbino, to give to the queen of France in 1518.<sup>80</sup> It does correspond to the subject listed for a panel of the *letto* in the papal inventories, but

the dimensions of the cartoon, as it survives, are smaller than those of the lost *lato* (although this may simply reflect damage). Another problem is that the subject matter seems to be so close to that of the *capo* as to be redundant. But evidence that this design had been woven as a tapestry in Brussels in 1521–22 is provided by the fact that Bernaert van Orley painted a *Holy Family* in 1522 that clearly reflects knowledge of this composition.<sup>81</sup>

While further study is required of these cartoons, which also appear to have been executed by more than one hand, the coincidence of subjects, dimensions, and character of the designs, the reuse of one to make a throne canopy for Francis I, and the circumstantial evidence for the other in Brussels by 1522, all suggest that they were indeed painted by Vincidor and his Netherlandish assistants for the papal *letto*. If this assumption is correct, the Boughton House cartoons confirm the evidence of the Louvre *modello* that the design of the *letto* ensemble was not conceived by

Raphael but was developed by Vincidor on the basis of the various Raphael and Raphael-school compositions that he must have taken with him to Brussels in 1520.

#### Use

Considering the date at which Vincidor wrote, weaving cannot have proceeded very far before the death of Leo X. Although the *letto* could have been completed and delivered during the brief pontificate of Adrian VI, it is more likely that work was suspended and then completed under Clement VII, who was elected to the pontifical seat on November 18, 1523, at the age of forty-five, and who certainly commissioned other tapestry sets from Pieter van Aelst.

Whatever the date of completion, the *letto* appears to have been used for the purpose for which it was originally intended. Prior to celebrating Mass or appearing in a public consistory, the pope was ceremonially robed in a room called the Camera del Papagallo and, according to the instructions compiled by Paris de Grassis for the preparation of this room, the furnishings included a "Lectum: ubi papa parandus est" (A bed, where the pope is adorned).<sup>82</sup> An illuminated manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, made for Leo in 1520, contains the psalms and prayers recited by the pope during this robing ceremony, and the coincidence of the date of its preparation and that of the Vincidor cartoons suggests that the robing ceremony was being aggrandized during this period. The frontispiece shows Leo seated in front of a cloth of honor, behind which the walls are hung with a precious patterned fabric. No tapestries or any ensemble analogous to the *letto* described in the inventories is visible, but this discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the manuscript predated the weaving of the Vincidor tapestries.<sup>83</sup> As noted above, part of the ensemble was still in use in the mid-eighteenth century when it was seen by Taja and was, by then, in the "sagrestiola" adjacent to the Stanza de' Paramenti.<sup>84</sup>

#### TAPESTRY DESIGNS OF THE RAPHAEL SCHOOL AFTER RAPHAEL'S DEATH

Raphael's premature death on April 5, 1520, was widely lamented by Roman patrons and men of letters, but it released the pupils and assistants in his studio to work with greater autonomy and creative independence. Raphael's will left the workshop under the direction of Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni, of whom the former appears to have been the dominant creative personality. Despite his youth, Giulio (b. ca. 1499) had played the key role in directing the execution of the figural scenes in the Vatican Loggia, and he was evidently identified as the preeminent designer

of large-scale figural compositions after Raphael's death. Penni, on the other hand, appears to have been more of a highly accomplished studio draftsman. Nicknamed the "Fattore," his principal task under Raphael seems to have been the preparation of finished drawings from sketches by Raphael—which he did so well that it is often difficult to tell the hands of the two artists apart—and he apparently continued to work in an analogous manner with Giulio on at least some projects, including a number of tapestry designs.

Despite a competitive bid made by Sebastiano del Piombo, Leo entrusted Giulio and Penni with the execution of the frescoes in the Sala di Costantino, in which the subjects and the overall scheme of trompe l'oeil tapestries alternating with fictive architectural spaces appears to have been conceived by Raphael in 1519 (fig. 149).<sup>85</sup> Although this work was interrupted by the death of Leo in December 1521 and the brief papacy of Adrian VI (1522–23), who was opposed to the extravagant artistic patronage of his predecessor, work resumed when Leo's nephew Giulio de' Medici was elected pope under the name of Clement VII on November 18, 1523. Giulio Romano was again the principal artist until his departure for Mantua at the end of 1524.



Fig. 97. View of the loggia, Villa Madama, Rome



Another major project that was incomplete at Raphael's death was the design and construction of Giulio de' Medici's villa on the outskirts of Rome, later known as the Villa Madama. This was also taken over by Giulio, who worked with Giovanni da Udine on the interior decorations, which combine stucco and fresco in a tour de force of *all'antica* design (fig. 97). The heady artistic climate in which these projects were accomplished and the exalted status that Raphael's assistants enjoyed in the eighteen months between the master's death and the death of Leo are suggested by the bitter way their rival, Sebastiano del Piombo, described them as "demi-gods," while Giulio de' Medici, writing to Cardinal Mario Maffei on June 4, 1520, described Giulio and Giovanni da Udine as "those two madmen," and again, on June 17, as "those two fantastic brains of painters."<sup>86</sup> Relationships between these strong artistic personalities were not easy. A fierce row developed in June 1520 between Giulio and Giovanni as to the relative division between fresco and stucco in Giulio de' Medici's villa. But despite these difficulties, it is evident that the period between Raphael and Leo's deaths was one of protean creativity and achievement by all the erstwhile Raphael assistants; it was probably during this time that the next of the major Raphael-school tapestry commissions was conceived.

#### LIFE OF CHRIST

The last of the large commissions placed by the papacy with the Pieter van Aelst workshop during the 1520s was for a twelve-piece set depicting scenes from the Life of Christ, of which eleven survive today in the Vatican collections.<sup>87</sup> This set has traditionally been known as the *Scuola nuova* to distinguish it from the earlier *Acts of the Apostles* set (the *Scuola vecchia*).<sup>88</sup> The circumstances in which the set was conceived are uncertain, although the tradition that it was a gift to Leo from Francis I on the occasion of the canonization of Francesco di Paola on May 1, 1519, can be rejected as an unsubstantiated claim made at the end of the eighteenth century, possibly based on confusion with the *Last Supper* tapestry that Francis gave Clement in 1533.<sup>89</sup>

More interesting is the description in the 1555 inventory of the set as "del tempo di papa Leone X" (from the time of Pope Leo X). On the basis of this record, Müntz and many subsequent writers have assumed that the set must have been conceived before Leo's death on December 1, 1521.<sup>90</sup> Müntz further assumed that the contract drawn up between Leo and Pieter van Aelst in June 1520 must have related to the weaving of this set. However, as Diez first noted in 1910, that assumption is almost certainly erroneous, since the details of the contract and the very high proportion of gold thread that it envisaged almost certainly related to the *Giochi di putti* set.<sup>91</sup>

Instead, the earliest probable reference to the *Life of Christ* set is a contract established about a year after Clement VII's election as pope on November 18, 1523. The details of this contract are found in a notarial document of 1531, drawn up on the occasion of the inspection of the set when it was finally delivered to Rome in that same year.<sup>92</sup> The document included a résumé of a papal order issued on October 4, 1524, in which Clement charged his representatives to pay van Aelst 12,050 ducats of gold, which was described as the final installment of a total cost of 20,750 ducats for a set of twelve tapestries woven with gold and silk. The payment was made on the condition that the weaving would be completed within eighteen months.<sup>93</sup> According to a second document, van Aelst provided the necessary guarantees on February 25, 1525, and on June 18, 1526, he received a sum of 7,400 ducats. Subsequently work seems to have been interrupted, presumably because of the difficult financial and political circumstances in which Clement found himself following the Sack of Rome in May 1527 and his escape from Rome to Orvieto in December of that same year. Work must have recommenced in the late 1520s, perhaps after Clement's return to Rome in October 1528, or perhaps following the signing of the Treaty of Cambrai between the emperor Charles V and Clement on August 3, 1529. Weaving must have been completed early in 1531, as evidenced by the notarial act of that year: on June 14, two experts, Master Angelo de Farfengo of Cremona and Master Johannes Lengles de Calais, examined the tapestries and declared that they were superior to those of Saint Peter and Saint Paul that van Aelst had executed for Leo X and that they included even more gold thread by a factor of one-third.<sup>94</sup> Although the production of the set was very delayed during the second half of the 1520s, the fact that the 1524 payment to van Aelst was described as the balance of the total sum does indicate that the first payment, and the initial order for the set, must have been made either under Leo X (as per the 1555 inventory description) or, more probably, by Clement VII following his election in 1523.

#### Iconography and Use

The set depicts twelve scenes from the Life of Christ, with a clear distinction between scenes from his childhood and scenes following the Crucifixion. Those of the first group depict, respectively, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Presentation in the Temple, with three panels devoted to the Massacre of the Innocents (cat. no. 29). The ones in the second group show the Descent into Hell (lost, probably looted by Napoleonic troops in 1798 but known from various engravings),<sup>95</sup> the Resurrection, Christ Appearing to the Magdalen (*Noli me tangere*), the Supper at Emmaus, the Ascension, and the Pentecost.



Fig. 98. *The Adoration of the Shepherds* from the *Life of Christ* (*Scuola nuova*). Tapestry designed by Giovanni Francesco Penni and others, woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1524–30. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 538 x 677 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City



Fig. 99. *The Adoration of the Magi* from the *Life of Christ* (*Scuola nuova*). Tapestry designed by Giovanni Francesco Penni and others, woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1524–30. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 567 x 958 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City





Fig. 100. *The Resurrection*, from the *Life of Christ* (*Scuola nuova*). Tapestry designed by Giovanni Francesco Penni and others, woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1524–30. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 538 x 956 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

The tapestries vary considerably in width, suggesting that they were designed for a specific location. This appears to be confirmed by the 1555 inventory, which states that the set was “fatti per el Consistorio” (made for the Consistory), and Vasari also mentions this location in his life of Penni.<sup>96</sup> The 1592–1608 inventory adds the information that the set was for the “sala del Concistoro secreto” (chamber of the Secret Consistory), and the 1608 inventory further adds that it was “per il Consistori Secreti, Natale e Pasque” (for the Secret Consistories [at] Christmas and Easter).<sup>97</sup> Addressing this question in two separate studies, Hope demonstrated that the evidence of ceremony under Clement VII is limited but his predecessor’s procedures are better documented. During Leo’s pontificate, secret consistories took place in the Camera del Papa-gallo, while public consistories were held in the Sala Regia or the Aula Tertia. Although the current appearance of the Sala Regia dates from its reconstruction and decoration beginning in 1538, examination of the original floor plans of this and the other two rooms reveals that it was the only one of the three that could have accommodated even half the series.<sup>98</sup> Hope therefore suggested that the set was actually composed of two distinct groups, following the thematic divide of the subjects, and that these were used in the same location on different occasions. This theory is supported

by the idiosyncratic variation in width among the panels. Both groups include one wide panel, two of medium width, and three of narrower width. Although the direction of the light source varies from one panel to the next within each group, it is consistent between tapestries of similar dimensions in both groups. Hope therefore proposed that the two groups were used in rotation in the Sala Regia, although even this formulation is accompanied by problems regarding the narrative sequence of the tapestries.

#### *Conception, Date, and Design*

Vasari gives contradictory evidence regarding the conception and design of the series. In his life of Raphael he stated that the master was responsible for its design, an assumption that was also propagated by sixteenth-century engravings after the designs, such as the *Descent into Hell* and *Ascension* made in 1541 by Nicolas Beatrixet, which carry the “invenit” of Raphael.<sup>99</sup> Yet in his life of Giovanni Francesco Penni, Vasari wrote that this artist helped Raphael in painting a large portion of the cartoons for the tapestries in the Consistory.<sup>100</sup>

That the 1555 inventory identification of this set as from the time of Leo X is erroneous is demonstrated by the résumé of the 1524 contract with van Aelst and the arrival of the set in Rome in

1531. And that Clement seems to have made the second part of a larger payment to van Aelst in 1524 suggests that the work was already well under way by that date and, thus, that it must have been started shortly after Clement's election at the end of 1523. The fact that work could have begun so soon after Clement's election suggests that he may have inherited a number of preliminary designs, finished *modelli*, and even some cartoons. As this work is unlikely to have taken place under Adrian VI, the circumstantial evidence therefore indicates that the conception of the set did, indeed, occur under Leo X.

A terminus post quem is probably provided by Raphael's death in April 1520. In the first substantive studies of the set, Müntz rejected the possibility of Raphael's involvement on the grounds that none of the extant preparatory sketches and *modelli* are in his hand and that few of the compositions carry any of the distinction and quality of his designs.<sup>101</sup> Subsequent scholars have generally agreed in doubting Raphael's involvement in the project. In a short but influential entry on two of the cartoon fragments now at the British Museum, Pouncey and Gere suggested that all the known drawings appear to be executed by a hand they identified as that of Penni.<sup>102</sup> Noting that these same drawings looked like fair copies rather than preliminary studies and that the overall character of the tapestries was highly suggestive of Giulio Romano's style in the compositions, the figures, and the decorative details, they suggested that Penni was probably working from preliminary designs by Giulio (a practice that was apparently employed again with the preparation of the *Story of Scipio* tapestries, for which, see pp. 344–47).<sup>103</sup> Hope's studies confirm the attribution of the *modelli* to Penni as well as the likelihood of Giulio's authorship in the conception of many of the scenes, albeit with the possible involvement of other artists such as Baldassare Peruzzi, Perino del Vaga, and Polidoro da Caravaggio. But as Hope also noted, these elements may simply reflect Penni's ability to synthesize a variety of sources within the Raphael workshop.<sup>104</sup>

Raphael's influence is most marked in the first and second panels of the set. The composition of the *Nativity* (fig. 98) is closely related to a drawing of the same subject (Louvre), whose format suggests that it was preliminary to an oil painting (lost or unexecuted) rather than a tapestry design.<sup>105</sup> Modern critics generally concur in giving this drawing to Penni, and although it may have been based on a lost Raphael sketch, it is clear from the pentimenti of the *modelli* that Penni was responsible for many of the compositional decisions that it embodied. Raphael's influence is also readily apparent in the *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 99), and it has been suggested that a drawing of this design in the Louvre may be a copy of a lost *modello* by Raphael himself. Here again, however, the gestures

and poses of the figures as they are developed in the tapestry design do not indicate the further involvement of Raphael.<sup>106</sup> Rather, as in the *Massacre of the Innocents* and the *Resurrection* (fig. 100) the friezelike composition and the physiognomic characteristics of the figures are much closer to the style that Giulio developed in his early Mantuan work. It may also be significant that the principal figures of the Madonna and child and the kneeling king are close to those in the *Adoration of the Magi* fresco in the Loggia, which was executed by Giulio or under his supervision.

Of the other scenes and the fluctuation of quality within the series, Müntz suggested that some, including the *Supper at Emmaus* and the *Descent into Hell*, may have been designed by Netherlandish artists rather than the team responsible for the rest of the designs.<sup>107</sup> However, since a *modello* for the *Supper at Emmaus* (formerly in the baron of Triqueti collection, current location unknown) appears to be in Penni's hand, this assumption seems misplaced. Similarly, the massing and gestures of the figures in the *Ascension* and *Pentecost* scenes have parallels in the *Last Supper* fresco in the Loggia, attributed by Vasari to Perino del Vaga.<sup>108</sup> The variation in quality among the different designs thus may have resulted, in part, from the fact that some *modelli* were executed by Penni from preliminary studies by Giulio and some of the weaker ones were provided later, executed by Penni alone, following Giulio's departure for Mantua at the end of 1524.

### The Cartoons

Müntz, unaware of Vincidor's 1521 letter to Leo at the time he wrote his studies of the *Life of Christ* series, suggested that Vincidor was probably responsible for the cartoons.<sup>109</sup> His proposal was based on the claims made by Francisco de Hollanda in his *Traité de la peinture* (1548) and by Vasari in the 1568 edition of his *Lives* that Vincidor traveled to Flanders to supervise the execution of tapestries from designs by Raphael. The subsequent discovery of Vincidor's letter to Leo provides circumstantial support for this theory, although in it Vincidor seemed to have intended to return to Rome as quickly as possible. He told Dürer that he would take his portrait back to Rome with him, and in his letter to Leo he asked the pope to intervene with Cardinal Medici, in whose service he still considered himself to be, for a pension of one ducat a month. His feelings about the Low Countries are vividly summarized in his final words to Leo: "I have great patience with foreign barbarians when they are far away."<sup>110</sup> Leo's death and Adrian VI's accession probably disappointed his hopes of a speedy return to Rome for he was still in (or perhaps had already returned to) Brussels in March 1523, as demonstrated by a payment he received from Floris of Egmond. No mention of his presence in Italy has yet emerged



in documentary sources. Nothing is known of Vincidor's whereabouts between 1523 and 1531, when he entered the service of Henry III of Nassau, for whose castle at Breda he provided designs. At this date, he was described as "Bouloigne, peintre de Bruxelles" and as one of Charles V's painters, which certainly implies his continued presence in the Netherlands.<sup>111</sup> Assuming that he may have remained in the Netherlands during the 1520s, a task that could have kept him active until 1530, at least intermittently, might have been the preparation of the *Life of Christ* cartoons.

The cartoons survived in damaged but complete form in the seventeenth century in the possession of Govaert Flinck, one of Rembrandt's pupils. Flinck cut out the sections that he considered to be of greatest artistic interest, principally the heads, hands, and feet; some 104 fragments passed to England, of which about fifty were in the collection of the Richardsons.<sup>112</sup> About thirty are known to survive today, of which the largest, for the *Massacre of the Innocents* tapestry included here (cat. no. 29), survives at the Foundling Hospital, London.<sup>113</sup> Unfortunately, it was entirely overpainted in oils in the eighteenth century so that nothing of its original character can be seen with the naked eye. As for the remaining fragments, studies by Oberhuber and Dacos have demonstrated that they reflect a mixture of styles, probably because of the involvement of a number of artists.<sup>114</sup> Some of the cartoon fragments were executed in a painterly style, corresponding to that evident in the *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons, with opaque paint applied in broad strokes. Dacos has identified this style with Vincidor and has detected the hands of two Netherlandish artists in the other fragments, one marked by a more careful and diluted application of paint than the first, and a third artist who applied the color in careful, small strokes and outlined the contours of the figures with a black line. An alternative suggestion has been made by Gnann, who, following Oberhuber, has suggested that the cartoons executed in a painterly style were probably executed in Rome, while those with the more transparent paint, like the *Adoration of the Magi* and at least the third of the *Massacre of the Innocents* panels, were executed in the Netherlands.<sup>115</sup> Both claims require further examination to establish the extent to which these different hands are identifiable and the degree to which they can be associated with specific cartoons. In the meantime, the circumstantial evidence relating to Vincidor's collaboration with Netherlandish artists on the *Giochi di putti* cartoons and the evidence for his continued presence in Brussels during the mid-1520s, taken in conjunction with the emphasis on the details of decoration and costume in the *Life of Christ* designs, tend to support Dacos's assumption that all the cartoons were executed in Brussels.

Returning to the question of the inconsistency of style between the later designs and those in the first group, the circumstantial evidence for Vincidor's involvement in the preparation of the cartoons opens a variety of explanations. First, it is possible that Vincidor played a larger role than previously thought in the development of certain compositions. Another factor in the diminution of quality between the earlier and later designs may have been the quality of Vincidor's assistants. If the first cartoons were prepared during 1523–25, Vincidor might have been able to draw on help from some of the leading Netherlandish artists and cartoonists of the day. But if the last designs in the series were turned into cartoon form during 1528–29, their preparation must have coincided with a period when many of the most gifted cartoonists in Brussels—certainly Bernaert van Orley and possibly also his two most gifted pupils, Pieter Coecke van Aelst and Michiel Coxcie—would have been engaged in the production of the cartoons for the *Battle of Pavia* and the *Hunts of Maximilian* tapestries, which were designed and woven for Charles V between 1526 and 1531. With the best talent, perhaps even Vincidor himself, engaged elsewhere, the artists available to complete the papal commission may have been of a much lower caliber. Although this is hypothetical, it seems likely that factors like these, relating to the interrupted process by which the set seems to have been produced, determined its uneven stylistic character.

#### PAPAL THRONE CANOPY WITH THE IMPRESA OF CLEMENT VII

Giulio de' Medici—Clement VII—was a sophisticated and discriminating patron. Educated at Padua, he had traveled extensively in Europe during the Medici exile from Florence between 1492 and 1512. Following his election as pope in 1513, Leo appointed his cousin Giulio archbishop of Florence and cardinal and, from 1517, papal vice-chancellor. In 1516 Giulio commissioned Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo to paint altarpieces for his archiepiscopal church, Narbonne Cathedral, and in 1518 Raphael and his workshop designed and decorated Giulio's Villa Madama on the outskirts of Rome. Following Giulio's election as pope in November 1523, he continued the work on the Sala di Costantino, awarding the contract to Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni. While documentation concerning papal tapestry commissions is lacking for these years, it seems logical that this keen patron of the arts would have continued the tapestry campaigns that had been initiated by Leo. But in addition to seeing the *Giochi di putti*, papal *letto*, and the *Life of Christ* projects to completion, Clement evidently commissioned at least one new tapestry ensemble in his own right.

This last papal commission of note placed before the Sack of Rome in 1527 is the papal throne canopy with Clement VII's



Fig. 101. *Allegory of Religion* (throne canopy of Pope Clement VII). Tapestry woven in the Brussels workshop of Pieter van Aelst, ca. 1525–30. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 450 x 531 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

device.<sup>106</sup> Woven in wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, it consists of a backcloth surrounded by a border (fig. 101) and a canopy with a valance. Originally, the ensemble also included side valances but these have been lost. No documentation relating to the commission or creation of these tapestries has survived, but technically and stylistically they are closely related to the *Scuola nuova* set, and for this reason it is generally assumed that they also were woven in Pieter van Aelst's workshop during the mid-1520s, presumably from cartoons prepared by Tommaso Vincidor. The ensemble was listed in the 1544 inventory of the Vatican tapestries, and the 1555 inventory states that it was used for public consistories.

The backcloth depicts an extensive landscape with two lions in the foreground holding pikes bearing standards with the papal insignia. The lion on the left gazes benignly at the viewer, while the one on the right bares its teeth in anger. Above them sit three symbolic figures among billowing clouds: Justice and Charity flank Faith or Religion, whose left hand rests on an open book of Scripture. Religion's feet rest on a crystal globe with a microcosm of the world. The landscape on the left side of the panel is bathed in daylight, but on the right, all is darkness and chaos and a city is

on fire (a conflation that reflects the contemporary taste for the idiosyncratic landscapes of Joachim Patinir and his imitators). This is an overt image of the Church Triumphant, as embodied on earth by the pope. When the pope was seated on his throne, his head



Fig. 102. *Queen Christina of Sweden at a Banquet Given by Pope Clement IX on December 9, 1668*. Pierre Paul Sevin, 1668. Pen and ink and watercolor, 24.8 x 37.6 cm. Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm



would have appeared on a level with the globe beneath Religion's feet and his throne would have been flanked by the standard-bearing lions whose contrasting expressions, benign and fierce, would reflect the papal policy of strength balanced by mercy.

Perry showed that the choice of a crystal globe may have had an additional resonance for contemporary viewers because of its familiarity as an element in one of Clement's personal *imprese*, which appeared directly above the papal throne, in the center of the valance.<sup>17</sup> This depicted the rays of the sun passing through a crystal ball and emerging as two beams. The first hits a tree, which it ignites, but the second beam strikes a white ribbon without harming it. The ribbon bears the motto *CANDOR ILLAUSVS* (whiteness undamaged, or innocence unharmed). According to Paolo Giovio, Clement's close friend and subsequent apologist, the motto was devised for Clement by his treasurer, Domenico Buoninsegni, to signify that the innocence of his soul was corrupted neither by slander nor force when his enemies plotted

against him during Adrian VI's brief pontificate. In this context, it therefore seems appropriate to interpret the glass globe at Religion's feet as the crystal of Clement's *impresa* writ large—as an indication of the light of God, granting peace and prosperity to the pure in heart while inflaming and punishing the dark and wicked world, the polarity symbolized by the contrasting circumstances on either side of the sphere. The concept finds a specific correlation in Scripture: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Clement's correspondence demonstrates that he took a keen interest in his artistic projects, and we can conjecture that the form and imagery of the tapestry design was developed by Clement in conjunction with such advisers as Paolo Giovio. The latter was asked to provide an inscription for the reading room of the library that Clement commissioned Michelangelo to design in San Lorenzo in Florence in 1524—the period during which we can assume that the canopy was conceived.

1. Archivio di Stato, Rome (henceforth ASR), Camerale I, busta 1557, reg. 3 [1544], fol. 87v; Müntz 1876b, p. 277; Müntz 1878–85, p. 28.

2. ASR, Camerale I, busta 1557, reg. 3 [1550], fol. 95r; busta 1557, reg. 3 [1555], fols. 105r, 106v; busta 1557, reg. 7 [1592–1608], fols. 1–2.

3. ASR, Camerale I, busta 1558, reg. 8 [1608], fol. 3v.

4. ASR, Camerale I, busta 1558, reg. 14 [1644–55], fol. 3v.

5. Müntz 1878–85, p. 28; Erkelens 1962a, p. 121.

6. Laking 1905, nos. 91, 92, fig. 24; T. Campbell 1996d.

7. Paris 1965a, pp. 30–31 (with bibliog.).

8. Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 389.

9. Fenaille 1903, pp. 221–22; Paris 1965a, p. 38; Szmydki 1987, pp. 128, 130; Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 378. The assumption that the set Louis XIV acquired was identical with a nine-piece set of grotesques acquired by Gregory XIII (1572–85) is incorrect (Erkelens 1962a, pp. 126–35, 137 n. 15; Paris 1965a, p. 38; Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 378). In fact, the nine-piece set of grotesques, listed as belonging to Gregory XIII in the Vatican inventories and described in the 1644–55 inventory as "parte grandi e parti mezzani, e parti piu piccoli" (ASR, Camerale I, busta 1558, reg. 14, fol. 4v), had a much smaller surface area than the earlier series—405 ells as opposed to 630. The set first appears in the 1592–1608 inventory (ASR, Camerale I, busta 1557, reg. 7, fol. 19) and was still at the Vatican in 1658 (ASR, Camerale I, busta 1559, reg. 20, fol. 5v). I have not been able to consult any inventories later than these, but the difference between the dimensions of the two series appears to rule out any identification between Gregory's set and that acquired by Louis XIV. Moreover, Gregory's set is always listed in the papal inventories with those that did not include metallic thread, while the set acquired by Louis XIV did include metallic thread, as shown by the three surviving pieces.

10. Fenaille 1903, pp. 221–45.

11. Ibid., pp. 222, 227, and fig. facing p. 236; this assumption is repeated in Paris 1965a, p. 38.

12. Forti Grazzini 1994, pp. 378–79.

13. Müntz 1878–85, p. 28.

14. Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 378.

15. Redig de Campos 1946; Dacos 1986.

16. Dacos 1986, p. 231, pl. LXXXVII/13.

17. Redig de Campos 1946, p. 46; Pope-Hennessy 1963, vol. 3, part 1, pp. 350–51.

18. "Fece similmente i cartoni di certi arazzi pieni di grottesche, che stanno nelle prime stanze del Concistoro"; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, p. 555; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 2, p. 491. This statement follows immediately after Vasari's description and attribution of the *Giochi di putti* tapestries to Giovanni da Udine.

19. For comparable details at the Villa Madama, see Dacos et al. 1987, pp. 38–39, 41, 51.

20. Shearman 1972, p. 89.

21. Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 387.

22. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, p. 555.

23. Quednau 1979, pp. 50–52; Wolk-Simon 1987, pp. 71–73.

24. Quednau 1979, pp. 26, 831–32 docs. 37a–b.

25. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 595.

26. Quednau 1979, p. 166.

27. Wolk-Simon 1987, pp. 70–161; Cox-Rearick 1984, pp. 178–98.

28. Dacos 1980b; Quednau 1981; Quednau in Vatican City 1984, pp. 357–62.

29. Dacos 1980b, pp. 61, 63–64, 94–95 (with bibliog.).

30. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, p. 363; Dacos 1980b, p. 63.

31. Dacos 1980b, pp. 74–76.

32. Ibid., pp. 61–64; Quednau in Vatican City 1984, p. 359.

33. The reference to two distinct sets led to some confusion in the earlier literature, for which see Csernyánszky [1948], pp. 10–11.

34. "Io o fato vinti cartoni per vinti peci che vano intorno ala sala quali dipinge li mei compagi cue Zulio lo Ian Frantiecho pader santo quella pensa di veder li piu bele spalere che mai sian state viste le piu alegre et rico dore. Io ho variati tucte le invintione del meglio bigarie de putini cose alegre acomodate per tute le vostre imprese riche a lo pusibile. Vere che non porne eser tute lavorate de mia mani. Io disegno lo tuto lo ordenatia lavoro la piu parte sulicito per l'onor de V. S." (I have made twenty cartoons for twenty pieces that will go in the room painted by my companions Giulio and Giovanni Francesco. The Holy Father may expect to behold the most beautiful *spalliere* ever seen, the most lively and rich with gold. I have varied the invention of the playing children with lively devices, accommodating as much as possible your rich

- imprese*. True that not all was worked by my hands. I designed everything and ordered work for the most part [at the invitation] for the honor of Your Holiness); Dacos 1980b, p. 95.
35. "Pannetti vinti d'oro et seta con giuochi di putti, di ale 17½ l'uno, in tutto alle 351"; ASR, Camerale I, busta 1557, reg. 3 [1544], fol. 87r; Müntz 1878–85, p. 26.
  36. ASR, Camerale I, busta 1558, reg. 14 [1644], fol. 3v.
  37. Taja 1750, pp. 276–79.
  38. The two *Giochi di putti* tapestries listed in the Vatican inventory of 1797, identified by Müntz 1878–85, p. 26, and subsequent writers as two of the Leonine set, were actually two of the set woven from designs by Gian Francesco Romanelli—information kindly provided by Pascal-François Bertrand from his forthcoming study of the Barberini workshops.
  39. An 1833 edition of Vasari published in Venice states that the tapestries were still in the Vatican, but no further evidence has survived to substantiate this statement; Csernyánszky [1948], p. 15.
  40. For a complete résumé of the extant evidence, with bibliography, see Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 606–13.
  41. Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 15, pp. 208–9, nos. 32–35; Quednau in Vatican City 1984, pp. 357–63.
  42. "Dipinse Giovanni i cartoni di quelle spalliere e panni da camere, che poi furono tessuti di seta e d'oro in Fiandra; nei quali sono certi putti che scherzano intorno varj festoni adorni dell'imprese di papa Leone, e di diversi animali ritratti dal naturale: i quali panni, che sono cosa rarissima, sono ancora oggi in palazzo" (Giovanni painted the cartoons for those hangings and chamber-tapestries that were afterwards woven in silk and gold in Flanders, in which are certain little boys that are sporting around various festoons, and as ornaments the devices of Pope Leo and various animals copied from life. These tapestries, which are very rare works, are still in the Palace at the present day); Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, p. 555; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 2, p. 491.
  43. For the argument and a bibliography, see Pouncey and Gere 1962, p. 88; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 606–7. For the Villa Madama fresco, see Lefevre 1973, pl. 13; and Dacos et al. 1987, p. 118.
  44. Dacos 1980b, pp. 65–68; Nesselrath 1989, p. 284.
  45. Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 12, pp. 108–9, nos. 4, 5; Pouncey and Gere 1962, pp. 88–89; Quednau in Vatican City 1984, pp. 357–58.
  46. Lefevre 1973, p. 266; Bober and Rubinstein 1987, p. 91.
  47. Philostratus 1931, pp. 21–29.
  48. Quednau in Vatican City 1984, p. 358.
  49. Quednau 1981; Quednau in Vatican City 1984, pp. 357–63.
  50. For full references to the drawings, engravings, and tapestries of the lost designs, see Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 607–11.
  51. Quednau 1979, p. 735, n. 958.
  52. Quednau 1981, p. 352.
  53. Ibid., p. 355.
  54. Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 607, no. 1.
  55. Quednau in Vatican City 1984, p. 363.
  56. Quednau 1979, p. 694, n. 785; Quednau 1981, p. 355.
  57. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, pp. 250–54; Gustavo Costa 1972, pp. 71–109; Levin 1969, pp. 32–57.
  58. These measurements suggest that the friezes which accompany the 17th-century copies of some of the Leonine tapestries may not have been attached to the original Leonine set (although they evidently were copied from a genuine 16th-century model that could have been added to the Leonine tapestries by the time they were copied; see p. 254 below).
  59. Quednau 1979, p. 250, n. 19; Quednau 1986, pp. 246, 250, n. 19.
  60. Quednau 1981.
  61. Quednau 1984, passim, esp. pp. 93, 119, n. 109.
  62. Document published in Müntz 1878–85, p. 25, n. 2.
  63. Diez 1910, pp. 30–32; Bombe 1929, pp. 18–19.
  64. "Et piu o comentiato le storie del leto so che serano grate pele invention che o fate neli quali peci li va lo ritrato de vostra santita davante a dio che ve dona la gratia del spirito santo Monsignor Reverendisimo de Medici monsignor Sibò. Io prego la santita Vostra fatia aver ricapito queste lettere sol perche domando monsignor reverendissimo de Medici fatia ritrare pichule due ritrati che a Sua Singoria duno quadro alolio di mano del mio mastro lo qual quadro sta in Firentia. Siano mese in una litera quele due teste de la Santita Vostra laltra de monsignor de medic atio io posa melgo contrafar. Io o avisato molte mie di questa domanda, gia saria fato lo leto" (And more, I have commenced on the scheme of the *letto* so that it will have [very] agreeable inventions, and I have created in [one] of these the portrait of Your Holiness before God who gives you the grace of the Holy Spirit, with Monsignor the Most Reverend de' Medici and Monsignor Cibo. I hope Your Holiness has received this letter only because I request Monsignor the Most Reverend de' Medici to make a small copy of the two portraits given to Your Lord as an oil painting by the hand of my master, the panel that is in Florence. If these two heads of Your Holiness, the other of Monsignor de Medici could be sent in a letter, I could better imitate [them]. I have already advised several people of this request, the bed should already have been made); Dacos 1980b, p. 95.
  65. For full discussion and bibliography, see T. Campbell 1996c.
  66. For transcriptions, see *ibid.*, pp. 444–45.
  67. *Ibid.*, p. 439, n. 23.
  68. Paris 1983a, pp. 72–74; Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, p. 119.
  69. T. Campbell 1996c, p. 445.
  70. "[L]a principal facciata di questo ricovero pontificio vien ricoperta preziosamente di un sontuoso panno d'arazzo antico, nel quale si esprime tessuta in ora una Nostra Donna col suo figliolo con angeli in aria e in terra, con San Giuseppe e con altre figure maggiori del vivo, sul meraviglioso cartone e disegno dell'unico Raffaello" (The principal facade of this pontifical shelter is covered [most] preciously with a sumptuous panel of antique tapestry, on which is depicted, woven in gold, Our Lady with her son, with angels in the sky and on the earth, with Saint Joseph and with other major figures from her life, from a marvelous cartoon and design of the most singular Raphael); Taja 1750, p. 83.
  71. Fischel 1934.
  72. K. T. Parker 1956, p. 564, pl. CXXI; London 1983, no. 132.
  73. Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 615.
  74. *Ibid.*, pp. 513–16.
  75. See T. Campbell 1996c, pp. 437–39, for the critical history of this ensemble.
  76. Jaffé in Murdoch 1992, pp. 84–86.
  77. E. Allegri et al. in Florence 1984, pp. 199–206, no. 18.
  78. T. Campbell 1996c, pp. 440–41.
  79. Described in the 1542–51 inventory of the French royal collection as "Le fons d'un ciel pour servir à ladite tapperie, ou meillieu duquel est figuré la trinité soustenue en l'air par les remembraunces des quatre évangélistes" (The back of a canopy in the middle of which is represented the Trinity supported in the air by the symbolic representations of the four Evangelists); Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, pp. 289, 304; T. Campbell 1996c, pp. 443–44.
  80. Béguin in Paris 1983, pp. 93–95, no. 10.
  81. For full discussion of the arguments for and against this identification, with further details of provenance, etc., see T. Campbell 1996c, pp. 441–42.
  82. Shearman 1973, pp. 373, 395 n. 21, 396 n. 22; T. Campbell 1996c, p. 439. Tristan Weddigen is preparing a study of the use of the Camera del



- Papagallo that promises to throw new light on the use and appearance of the "letto de paramento."
83. Wieck in London and New York 1994, pp. 56–60.
  84. T. Campbell 1996c, p. 439.
  85. Hartt 1958, vol. 1, pp. 42–51.
  86. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
  87. Müntz 1878–85, pp. 24–26; Müntz 1897, pp. 36–44; Bombe 1929, pp. 21–22, 24–26; Adelson in Florence 1980a, pp. 45–46 (with bibliog.); Hope 1984 (with bibliog.); Forti Grazzini 1990a, pp. 57–59; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 616–24 (with bibliog.).
  88. Passavant 1860, vol. 2, p. 216.
  89. Müntz 1878–85, p. 24.
  90. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 89; Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 616; Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, p. 290.
  91. Müntz 1897, p. 36; Diez 1910, pp. 32–33.
  92. Müntz 1883, pp. 139–44; Bombe 1929, pp. 24–26.
  93. For the financial context in which this payment was made, see Schneebalg-Perelman 1969, pp. 308–9.
  94. Müntz 1883, pp. 139–44; Bombe 1929, pp. 24–26.
  95. Ruland 1876, p. 257; Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 15, p. 250, no. 22.
  96. ASR, Camerale I, busta 1557, reg. 3 [1555], fol. 105r. For Vasari, see note 100 below.
  97. ASR, Camerale I, busta 1557, reg. 7 [1592–1608], fol. 15; ASR, Camerale I, busta 1558, reg. 8 [1608], fol. 1v. From 1644 the set is described as "per la Sala de Paramenti Natale, e Pasqua" (for the Sala de Paramenti [at] Christmas and Easter); ASR, Camerale I, busta 1558, reg. 14 [1644–55], fol. 1.
  98. Hope 1968, pp. 10–20; Hope 1984, pp. 326–27.
  99. Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 15, p. 250, nos. 21.1, 22.1; Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 616.
  100. Giovanfrancesco Penni . . . fu di grande aiuto a Raffaello a dipignere gran parte de' cartoni dei panni d'arazzo della cappella del papa e del concistoro, e particolarmente le fregiature" (He was a great help to Raphael . . . in painting a large part of the cartoons for the tapestries of the Pope's Chapel and of the Consistory, and particularly the ornamental borders); Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, p. 644; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 1, p. 819.
  101. Müntz 1878–85, pp. 24–25; Müntz 1897, pp. 36–44.
  102. For the known drawings, see Hope 1984, p. 331.
  103. Pouncey and Gere 1962, p. 81.
  104. Hope 1968, pp. 25ff. (with bibliog.); Adelson in Florence 1980a, p. 45; Sricchia Santoro 1981, p. 83; Hope 1984, p. 331; Dacos in Brussels and Rome 1995, p. 295.
  105. Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 513–16. For a recent attempt to reattribute this drawing to Raphael, see Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, p. 288, and the refutation by Monbeig-Goguel 1999, p. 496.
  106. Davidson 1985, fig. 111.
  107. Müntz 1897, pp. 42–43.
  108. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 594; Hope 1984, p. 331.
  109. Müntz 1878–85, pp. 38–39; Müntz 1897, p. 25.
  110. "Io o gran patientia con barbari strani luntani"; Dacos 1980b, p. 94.
  111. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
  112. K. T. Parker 1956, p. 326; Byam Shaw 1976, p. 136.
  113. For the Foundling Hospital fragment, see Nicolson 1972, pp. 76–77, no. 69, illus. 37. Much of the material for a study of this series was recorded by Hope 1968. For a recent summary of the extant fragments with further bibliography, see Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, p. 291.
  114. Oberhuber 1963, p. 50; Dacos 1980b, pp. 79–84; Dacos in Brussels and Rome 1995, pp. 388–92.
  115. Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, p. 291.
  116. Perry 1977 (with bibliog.); Adelson in Florence 1980a, p. 46, no. 67.
  117. Perry 1977, pp. 679–80.

## The Triumph of Hercules

From a seven-piece set now known as the *Triumphs of the Gods* (historically known as the *Antiques*)

Design and possibly cartoon here attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine, between 1517 and 1520

Woven in the Dermoyen workshop (?), Brussels, ca. 1540–42

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
480 x 632 cm (15 ft. 9 in. x 20 ft. 8 7/8 in.)

7 warps per cm

Brussels mark (bottom selvage at left) and illegible workshop mark (right selvage at bottom)

The Royal Collection, Hampton Court Palace, lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

**PROVENANCE:** 1542, purchased by Henry VIII and lined for use at Westminster Palace; 1547, transferred to the Tower Wardrobe some months after Henry VIII's death and listed there in the inventory of his goods; 1649, listed in the Tower Wardrobe following the execution of Charles I; 1654, reserved for Oliver Cromwell's use; 1659, listed in the "Rich Bedchamber" and King's Withdrawing Room at Hampton Court; 1675, listed in inventory of goods at the Tower; 1688, listed in inventory of goods at Windsor Palace; 1695, listed in inventory of goods at Whitehall; 1696, cleaned and repaired at workshop of John Vanderbank; 1707, this panel (and one other?) probably hung in William III's Presence Chamber at Hampton Court (the rest of the tapestries in the set hung at Somerset House where they were repaired in situ in 1732–33, and where they remained until the destruction of the palace in 1776, after which they disappeared); removed to Windsor Castle at some point after 1841; 1986, King's Presence Chamber at Hampton Court.<sup>1</sup>

**REFERENCES:** Laking 1905, nos. 91, 92, fig. 24; Erkelens 1962a; Paris 1965a, pp. 38–39, 51–53; E. Duverger 1969, pp. 184–90; Boccardo 1990, pp. 461–73; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 2, pp. 378–86; T. Campbell 1996d; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 173, 264–65; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 85–87.

**CONDITION:** Considerably faded with spot repairs throughout the surface. The fading has caused the dark blue and rich red areas to predominate over the once lively palette of light green, bright pink, sky blue, and lemon yellow. Extensive reweaving is evident in areas originally woven in dark brown tones, probably undertaken during 1696 cleaning and repair in the workshop of the "royal arras maker" John Vanderbank.<sup>2</sup> Due to subsequent fading, the wool used in these rewoven areas is now a brown-orange tone. The gilt surface of metal-wrapped silk threads is mostly lost so these areas now appear a dull silver color.

The *Triumph of Hercules* is one of two tapestries (the other being the *Triumph of Bacchus*) that survive from a set of seven woven for Henry VIII

about 1540–42. They are the earliest surviving and least modified reweaving of a lost set of tapestries that are thought to have been designed by Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giovanni da Udine between 1517 and 1520 at the instigation of Leo X (see pp. 225–29). The papal set, known as the *Grotesques of Leo X*, disappeared in the late eighteenth century, but its appearance can be reconstructed from later sixteenth-century weavings (of which Henry's set is the earliest known) and copies made at the Gobelins Manufactory in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The series portrayed classical gods in a fanciful grotesque setting, an elaboration of the decorative formula that Raphael and his pupils—inspired by the ancient decorations in Nero's Domus Aurea, or Golden House—developed in Cardinal Bibbiena's *loggetta* and *stufetta*, the Vatican Loggia, and the Villa Madama between 1515 and 1530. Apart from the importance of this series as an artistic achievement in its own right, and its place in the development of the "grotesque" vocabulary, the reweaving of this design for Henry VIII provides a vivid demonstration of the important role that tapestry played as a conduit for Italian aesthetics to northern Europe in the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

### Description

The center of the tapestry is occupied by a fanciful colonnade supported at either end by herms whose knobby sides refer to Vitruvius's theory regarding the genesis of classical columns from tree trunks, a concept that Donato Bramante had developed in the columns of the Portico della Canonica di Sant'Ambrogio, Milan.<sup>3</sup> The colonnade is supported in the center by an elaborate sculptural base, whose lower section incorporates dolphin heads, a bucranium, and lion and grotesque masks, and terminates above with the figures of two sphinxes. The molding between them carries a relief of the Rape of Europa.

This fanciful base supports a pavilion of four slender columns and a pediment whose tympanum features a bust in a central cartouche, flanked by a lamp and a brazier of burning coals, the latter possibly an allusion to one of the Medici *imprese*. Hercules stands on a stepped















Detail of cat. no. 26

plinth in the middle of the pavilion, holding his traditional attributes, a club and a lion skin. The relaxed pose of the central figure recalls various antique Roman representations such as the *Commodus as Hercules* (Vatican Museums) and the *Farnese Hercules* (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples)—in turn copies of a Greek original—although neither provides a direct source.<sup>4</sup> He is flanked by a hydra and a lion, allusions to two of the Twelve Labors for which he is renowned: the defeat of the Hydra of Lerna and the defeat of the Nemean Lion. The projecting space of the pavilion, depicted in steep perspective, contrasts with the narrowness of the colonnade at either side, which supports an elaborately modeled entablature from which a red valance hangs. The valance is embroidered with jewels of alternating colors, probably in allusion to the heraldic colors of the Medici, which from the mid-1460s were red and/or

blue on a gold ground.<sup>5</sup> Beneath the valance the bays are decorated in delicate tints of blue, pink, yellow, and green, in marked contrast to the stronger tones above and below. The six bays of the arcade form a frame for vignettes of Hercules' various feats and Labors. From left to right we see the hero supporting the firmament in Atlas's place, capturing the Cretan Bull, killing the Nemean Lion, lifting the giant Antaeus off his feet to deprive him of his strength so that Hercules could crush him, killing the centaur Eurytion, and striking the bronze chimes that he used to startle the Stymphalian Birds in order to shoot them.

Two of these figures, Hercules holding up the firmament and Hercules killing the centaur Eurytion, are copied, in reverse and with minor variations, from vignettes that originally appeared in the border of Raphael's *Paul Preaching at Athens*, one of the *Acts of the Apostles* tap-

estries. (The vignette of Hercules killing the centaur Eurytion was replaced with an inscription in the early 1540s, but its appearance can be established by the border on duplicate tapestries made for an unidentified member of the Habsburg family [fig. 80] and Ercole Gonzaga about 1550. This later tapestry also includes an image of Hercules killing the Stymphalian Birds in the other lateral border, which may, or may not, record the appearance of one of the other lost *Acts of the Apostles* borders.)<sup>6</sup> The model for Hercules' posture in the vignette of Hercules and Antaeus was probably found in a classical group of the same subject, then in the Belvedere (Vatican; now Palazzo Pitti, Florence).<sup>7</sup> The figure of Antaeus corresponds closely to that in a lost Raphael-school drawing recorded by a chiaroscuro print by Ugo da Carpi and by an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi generally ascribed to Giulio Romano.<sup>8</sup> The friezelike



Fig. 103. Sarcophagus. Roman, 3rd century A.D. Marble. Museo Torlonia, Rome

composition of the central arcade is strongly reminiscent of another antique model, a sarcophagus with the feats of Hercules that was much copied by early sixteenth-century artists when it belonged to Cardinal Jacopo Savelli (fig. 103).<sup>9</sup> The bottom of the arcade is hung with swags of fruit and leaves and red drapes whose lambrequined fringes incorporate pendent mirrors. The drapes provide a backdrop to two more of the feats that appear in the space to either side of the base support: at the left, Hercules chaining Cerberus the guardian of the gate to Hades, accompanied by Mercury and Minerva—the figure lying on the ground is Pluto, wounded by Hercules on this occasion; and at the right, Hercules shooting the centaur Nessus with an arrow as Nessus attempts to abduct Deianira.

In contrast to the red of the lower drapes and the subtle harmony of colors of the arcade, the ground of the space above the arcade is a deep blue, providing a vivid contrast to the grotesque decorations with which it is filled. These incorporate swags of dead game and fish, and swirling acanthus forms that flower into fantastic creatures and nests with pelicans stabbing their breasts to feed their young, the

well-known symbol of Charity. The grotesques are centered on two cartouches that depict scenes from Hercules' youth—at the left, the infant Hercules strangling two serpents in his cradle; and at the right, the infant Hercules studying a book, alluding to his instruction in literature and the arts during his youth. Above each cartouche sits a sibyl, holding a lion by the paw on each side. The socle above the pediment of the central pavilion supports a figure of Fame holding two trumpets, which also derives from the left border of Raphael's *Paul Preaching at Athens*.<sup>10</sup> The border of the tapestry features a blank escutcheon in each of the corners and a boy's head in a shallow geometric molding in the center of each of the border's four sides. The areas between are occupied by scrolling acanthus forms and winged putti on a rich red ground.

#### Iconography

Hercules had been considered an embodiment of Virtue and as a personification of Christian Fortitude from the medieval period. Coluccio Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis* (ca. 1405) provided a Christianizing reading of the myth, and during the second half of the fifteenth century the

theme was further developed by Neoplatonic writers. The Florentine humanist Cristoforo Landino wrote a celebratory dialogue on the Medici, *De vera nobilitate* (1475), which ends with an extended moral explication in which Hercules is considered not only as an example of the active life and civic virtue but also, in a Neoplatonic sense, as an embodiment of Reason.<sup>11</sup> By the early sixteenth century, the myth was thus susceptible to a rich variety of interpretations, but it seems to have been invoked in this instance for a more pointed purpose. In a study of three eighteenth-century reproductions of the lost Leonine set, Forti Grazzini suggested that the *Triumph of Hercules* tapestry was probably created as an allegorical celebration of Leo X, the key to this identification provided by the reading that Shearman gave for the inclusion of two of Hercules' feats or Labors in the border of *Paul Preaching at Athens*.<sup>12</sup> Seeking to explain the unlikely pairing of Leo and Hercules, Shearman adduced the *Historia viginti saeculorum per totidem psalmos conscripta*, compiled between 1513 and 1518 by Aegidius of Viterbo, general of the Augustinians, which explained that Hercules was a type for Leo X because he was the first Tuscan hero to bear the *insignia leonis*. Exploring this argument further, Shearman revealed the extent to which the analogy between Leo and Hercules was widely current in contemporary commentaries. Hercules bearing the weight of the universe on his shoulders seems to allude to, or at least to provide a parallel image for, the statement in the preface to Raffaello Brandolini's *Dialogus Leo nuncupatus* (1513) that the pope bears the great weight of the universe on his shoulders with ease (the sign of Leo appears, appropriately enough, in the center of the celestial globe). This Labor was interpreted as a demonstration of Leo's devotion to religion in Lilio Gregorio Giraldi's *Herculis vita*, completed at the Vatican in October 1513. Furthermore, the scene of Hercules defeating the centaur Eurytion, which originally appeared at the bottom of the *Paul Preaching at Athens* tapestry, was commonly interpreted in the contemporary exegetical commentaries as a symbol of the subjugation of the baser instincts. Finally, Shearman noted that the appearance of Fame at the top of the border was to be explained by Fulgentius's statement that this was the etymological meaning of the Greek name Herakles.<sup>13</sup> On the basis of this evidence, Shearman concluded that the border was



thus both an *exemplum virtutis* and a celebration of the patron, with the further suggestion that it thus provided a key to the potential significance of all the *Acts of the Apostles* borders.

The fact that two of the Labors of Hercules and the figure of Fame are repeated in the *Triumph of Hercules* design suggests that the exercise of designing the *Acts* borders must have been the point of departure for the more ambitious scheme elaborated in the *Grotesques of Leo X* (*Triumphs of the Gods*). Apart from the repetition of the vignettes already mentioned, several of the images in the *Triumph of Hercules* had well-established Christianized and Neoplatonic interpretations; for example, Hercules' struggle with Antaeus represented the conflict between earthly and spiritual impulses; it is only through removal from physical desires (the earth) that we can attain spiritual rewards.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Hercules chaining Cerberus was susceptible to interpretation as a metaphor of Christ's Descent into Hell and Resurrection or, more generally, of the Christian faith in immortality. A closer reading of these scenes in the context of contemporary panegyric will almost certainly reveal that the components of the design are chosen with a view to celebrating Leo, through his prototype Hercules, as the supreme embodiment of the Christian virtues.

#### The "Antiques" of Henry VIII

According to an annotation in the 1542 inventory of furnishings at Westminster Palace, Henry VIII's set of the *Antiques* was purchased from the Florentine merchant Jehan Baptist Gualteroti in June 1542, at the same time as his set of the *Acts of the Apostles*. Confirmation of this information is provided by an item in the accounts of Sir Anthony Denny for the period 1542–47. Denny was an intimate of Henry VIII, chief baron of the Exchequer, and keeper of Westminster Palace during these years, in which role he disbursed immense sums for building materials and related furnishings, including a payment in 1542 of £2,325 15s. 6d. "to John Baptiste Galterott for two peces [sets] of Riche Arras thone of the Actes of Thappostelles and thother of Antiques."<sup>15</sup> Two tapestries from each set had been delivered by April 1542 and are listed in the inventory, initially drawn up on April 24, 1542, while the other parts of the sets, seven and five tapestries, respectively, were delivered to the palace on November 3, 1542, having



Detail of cat. no. 26

been lined (Henry VIII's *Acts of the Apostles* included nine, not ten, pieces, and his *Antiques* included seven, not eight, pieces). An annotation next to the entries for the first two pairs of tapestries indicates that they were also lined and returned on the same day. Careful note was made of the resulting reduction in length to the tapestries of about three inches. Gualteroti was one of a family of rich Italian merchants that had been based in Antwerp since the beginning of the sixteenth century and that played a leading role in the Netherlandish spice trade. This is the first evidence that survives of Gualteroti's supplying tapestries to Henry VIII (he was subsequently involved in another transaction with the English crown, in 1549). Still, since much of the Netherlandish tapestry industry was con-

trolled by rich merchants, his involvement in such a context is not surprising.<sup>16</sup>

#### Workshop

The workshop in which this set was woven is unknown. The *Triumph of Bacchus* panel carries the Brussels mark in the lower selvage and an incomplete merchant or weaver's mark that is possibly that of the workshop of Willem and Jan Dermoyen. These leading tapestry merchants of the 1530s were probably responsible for the weaving of the *Battle of Pavia* and the *Hunts of Maximilian* sets for the Habsburg court (see p. 278 and cat. nos. 36, 39, 40). They certainly were in a position to offer sets of these subjects to Süleyman the Magnificent in 1533. One of the Dermoyen family was paid for sup-

plying part of a set of the *Acts of the Apostles* to Francis I in 1534, presumably a portion of an ongoing payment plan, and it is therefore likely that they continued to own the cartoons from which Henry VIII's set was made. By association, we may therefore speculate, albeit very tentatively, that the Dermoyen were also the owners of the *Grotesques* cartoons and that they played a part in the production of Henry VIII's set.<sup>17</sup>

Henry VIII's set comprised seven, not eight, pieces. No evidence indicates which design was missing, but in view of the extraordinary political and religious developments of the 1530s, which had culminated in Henry's repudiation of the Roman Catholic Church and his assumption of the role of the supreme head of the Church of England, it is tempting to assume that it may have been the *Triumph of Faith among the Virtues*, which, designed for a papal patron, may have included overt papal insignia or allusions to Petrine primacy. The design of this subject, as we know it from Noël Coypel's copies, does not include papal insignia. Although this could have been edited out by Coypel, or even by the weavers who wove the sixteenth-century tapestry that he copied, the question as to which panel Henry's set lacked must remain open.

The delivery of the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Antiques* sets to Westminster Palace in 1542 coincides with a period of extensive rebuilding.

Westminster was Henry's principal residence in London, and during the early 1540s considerable rebuilding and redecoration took place there, including the construction of an outside preaching place with a classical loggia and a pulpit decorated with "antique" devices.<sup>18</sup> The interior decoration involved a number of Continental artists and craftsmen, such as Nicholas Bellin of Modena who had worked with Rosso Fiorentino and Francesco Primaticcio at Fontainebleau, before transferring to Henry VIII's service in 1537. None of this work has survived, but its character can be inferred from an anonymous plasterwork decoration with the arms of Henry VIII and Catherine Parr, which is attributed to Bellin.<sup>19</sup> Dating from between 1543 and 1546, it demonstrates how close the decorations were to those at Fontainebleau. In view of the timing and character of this activity, it seems likely that the purchase of the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Antiques* sets was linked with the modernization taking place at Westminster and that it reflects a conscious intention by Henry to acquire Italian designs. The circumstances in which the sets were made is unknown, but the very high cost, combined with Henry's belated interest in Italian aesthetics, under the influence of Bellin and other Italian artists working at the English court in the late 1530s and early 1540s, suggests that they were probably commissioned, per-

haps at the instigation of Bellin. Shortly after Henry VIII's death in 1547, they were transferred to the Tower Wardrobe in London.<sup>20</sup>

1. T. Campbell 1996d, p. 75.
2. T. Campbell 1994, pp. 28, 30, nn. 52, 53.
3. Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 2, p. 387.
4. Haskell and Penny 1981, pp. 188–89, 228–32; Bober and Rubinstein 1987, pp. 165–66; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 2, p. 387.
5. Brogan 1993, p. 181.
6. Shearman 1972, p. 89, figs. 25, 28.
7. Bober and Rubinstein 1987, p. 173, no. 137.
8. Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, pp. 110–11, nos. 49, 50 (as Raphael).
9. Bober and Rubinstein 1987, p. 170; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 2, p. 387.
10. Shearman 1972, p. 89, figs. 25, 28.
11. L. Ettlinger 1972.
12. Shearman 1972, p. 89.
13. Ibid.
14. Bober and Rubinstein 1987, p. 172.
15. British Museum, London, MS B1. Lansdowne Charter 14.
16. T. Campbell 1996d, pp. 73–74; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 103–4.
17. See T. Campbell 1996d, p. 78, for the problematic identification of the mark.
18. Thurley 1993, pp. 58–60, 108, 199–200, 217.
19. Béguin 1970.
20. T. Campbell 1996d, p. 75.



## Three Putti with a Lion and Symbols of the Papacy

Woven from a cartoon by Pietro Paulo de Gubernatis (?), copied, ca. 1634 (?), from a 16th-century tapestry woven ca. 1521–24 from designs and cartoons by Giovanni da Udine and Tommaso Vincidor in the Brussels workshop of Pieter van Aelst

Woven in the Barberini manufactory (?), Rome, ca. 1635 (?)

Wool and silk

310 x 287 cm (10 ft. 2 in. x 9 ft. 5 in.)

7 warps per cm

Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (20.002)

(not in exhibition)

PROVENANCE: Ca. 1870, recorded in the Paris apartment of Princess Mathilde Bonaparte; May 17–21, 1904, sold, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, part of no. 448; Camillo Castiglioni collection, Vienna; November 17–21, 1925, sold, Frederic Muller, Amsterdam, part of no. 270; Bernheimer collection; purchased by Alexis Nagy de Verseghe and Elisabeth Janssen; 1948, purchased by the Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCES: Müntz 1878–85, pp. 26–28, 49–50; Müntz 1897, pp. 48–52; Csernyánszky [1948], pp. 5–28 (with bibliog.); László 1981, pp. 67–68, 78, 89; De Strobel 1989, pp. 33–34; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 606–13; Delmarcel 1996, pp. 133–35.

CONDITION: Yellow silk and wool of background are worn and considerably faded, and the silk has lost its original sheen.

As discussed on pages 229–33, the original *Giochi di putti* set was commissioned by Pope Leo X to hang in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican Palace and included twenty tapestries depicting children playing and devices symbolic of Leo X's rule, after designs by Giovanni da Udine and Tommaso Vincidor and cartoons painted in Brussels by the latter. The playful tone of the compositions concealed a serious political subtext, the celebration in allegorical and symbolic form of Petrine supremacy, and the dawn of a new golden age under Leo X. Although the original set, executed in the early 1520s in the Brussels workshop of Pieter van Aelst, disappeared in the late eighteenth century, its appearance can be reconstructed from engravings, preparatory designs, and seventeenth-century tapestry copies of eight of the lost panels. The origin and provenance of these later copies before their appearance in the collection of Princess Mathilde Bonaparte are unknown.

The group was dispersed in 1904, at which time they were erroneously assumed to derive from the papal set itself. Four tapestries, including this piece, now belong to the Iparművészeti Múzeum, two belong to the Metropolitan Museum, a seventh is in a private New York collection, while the location of the eighth is currently unknown.<sup>2</sup>

### Description of the Tapestry

Like the other tapestries in the set, the main scene is enclosed within a border comprising two narrow bands decorated with flowers on either side of a Greek key pattern in yellow on blue like that of the *Acts of the Apostles* set (the blue of this border is a lighter tone than that of the other three pieces from the set in Budapest). The main field of the tapestry depicts a shallow stage with a ground of grass. The back wall is woven in yellow wool with narrow stripes of yellow silk in imitation of the gold ground of the lost Leonine tapestries. Much of the space in this shallow stage is occupied by three large swags of fruit and leaves that hang from ribbons tied to rings in the mouths of two lion masks located in the upper corners of the stage. The ribbons continue around the two pendent swags and terminate in two small red balls. The space between the masks is filled by a lambrequin, which is richly decorated with ribbons and jewels, the latter in the heraldic colors of the Medici (the same motif appears in the *Triumph of Hercules* design from the *Triumphs of the Gods*, cat. no. 26). A lion is standing in front of the central swag. He wears a crown whose points support a flat surface on which a globe, carrying the sacred monogram of Christ, is balanced. The lion is flanked by two winged putti, both wearing crowns of laurel. That on his right carries the imperial crown and scepter, insignia of the temporal world; that on his left carries the papal tiara and keys, insignia of the spiritual world, while his foot rests on a red ball. The figure holding the papal tiara is based on that of a putto stringing a bow by the Greek sculptor Lysippos, known from various Roman copies.<sup>3</sup> The figure reappears in a drawing of Venus, Vulcan, and Cupid from Raphael's workshop

(Louvre).<sup>4</sup> A third putto flies above the lion, carrying the keys of Saint Peter between two doves bearing olive branches. This figure appears to be based on a lost Raphael drawing, known from an engraving by the Master NDB (fig. 93).<sup>5</sup>

In a study of the iconography of the putti series, Quednau suggested that the lion must have been intended as a symbol for Leo, a reference to the conceit presented in Leonine panegyrics that Leo was the fulfillment of Revelation 5:5, which prophesied the victory of the lion from the root of Jesse: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals therof." Leo sought to promote this conceit from early in his reign, for example, in one of the papal coins that depicted a lion surrounded by the legend VICIT LEO DE TRIBU IUDA (Leo of the tribe of Judah conquers).<sup>6</sup> The identification of the lion as Leo is obscured in the seventeenth-century tapestry by the presence of the sacred monogram on the globe above the lion's crown, which invites identification of the lion as Christ. However, a drawing of this design, either an original model, or a copy from that, now in Budapest (fig. 104), shows that the globe originally featured a heraldic lily, which, like the red ball at the foot of the foremost putto, provided an overt allusion to the Medici coat of arms. Thus, the lion did stand for Leo in the original set, while the implements carried by the three putti that surround him symbolize his jurisdiction over both the temporal and the spiritual worlds, and his power over the judgment and remission of sins (thus echoing the theme of the *Charge to Peter* tapestry from the *Acts of the Apostles*; see cat. no. 18).

Finally, like the other three tapestries in Budapest, the tapestry is crowned by a rich frieze depicting *impresae* that Leo X adopted from his father, Lorenzo de' Medici: three ostrich feathers (white, green, and red) symbolizing the virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity, respectively) alternating with a diamond ring (representing the love of God), all set within a filigree of arabesques and acanthus scrolls. Above, there is a narrow band of rings and flames that László



Fig. 104. *Three Putti with a Lion and Symbols of the Papacy*. Preparatory drawing for a tapestry design by Tommaso Vincidor, ca. 1521. Pen with brown ink and wash heightened with white on paper, 20.4 x 29.9 cm. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

assumed are allusions to other Medici emblems. While the incongruous presence of the flames supports this reading, the rings are also a rather coarse effort at the *trompe l'oeil* illusion of the rings from which the tapestry is suspended.<sup>7</sup> Although the frieze is evidently copied from a sixteenth-century model, it is not certain that such friezes were attached to the Leonine tapestries. The *basamento* of the Sala di Costantino is approximately 230 centimeters high.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the seventeenth-century copies are over 3 meters high if the top frieze is included. Without the frieze, they measure approximately 260 centimeters, a height that seems more appropriate to the location. It is therefore possible that the models from which the seventeenth-century friezes were copied were not actually attached to the original Leonine tapestries when they were first provided for the Sala di Costantino. They could have been attached at a later date to adapt some of the tapestries to a different location.

The execution of the seventeenth-century tapestries is much coarser than that of the original Leonine set in technique, fineness of weave, interpretation of detail, and in quality of materials. While the eight copies provide important

visual information about the lost set, and are of great interest in the context of seventeenth-century patronage, they should not be taken as an exact duplicate or substitute for the splendor of the lost Leonine set.

#### *Place of Manufacture*

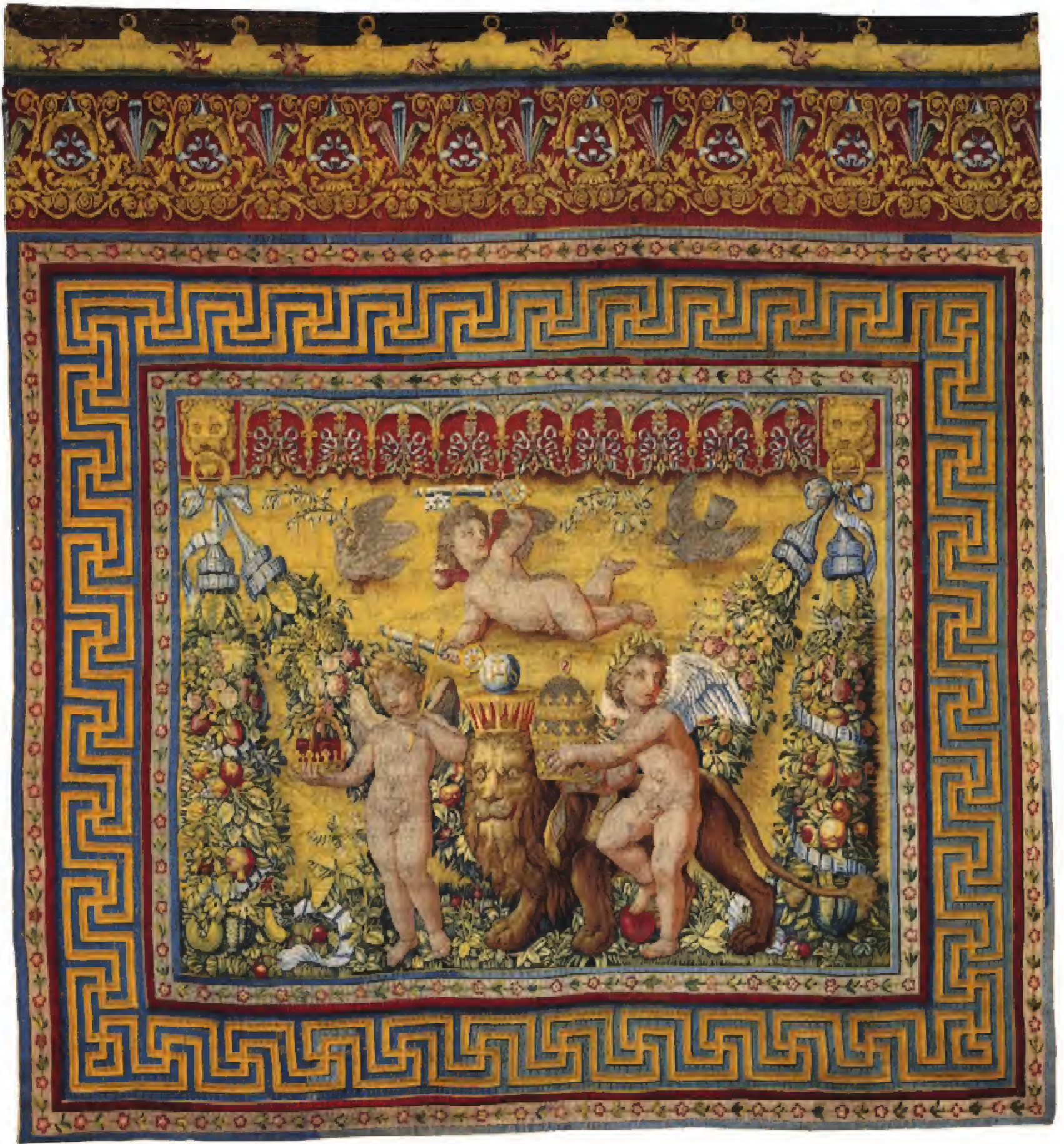
None of the eight tapestries from the collection of Princess Mathilde Bonaparte is marked, and the questions of where and when they were made have never been satisfactorily resolved. When Müntz first outlined the extant evidence for the *Giochi di putti* set in his 1878–85 history of tapestry in Italy (unaware of the Bonaparte tapestries), he noted that a duplicate set of eight pieces appeared to have been woven at the Barberini manufactory during the late 1630s. This assumption was based on evidence that the artist Pietro Paulo de Gubernatis was paid in 1634 for painting copies of eight of the Leonine *Giochi di putti* between 1633 and 1635. Müntz thought that these were subsequently used as tapestry cartoons because of payments to the Barberini master weavers Giacomo della Riviera (d. 1639) and his successor, Gaspare Rocci, related to the execution of an eight-piece set of tapestries in wool,

silk, and gold, between 1637 and 1642, of which certain pieces were described as “with designs of putti in imitation of those of Raphael.”<sup>9</sup> By the time he published his study of Raphael’s tapestries in 1897, Müntz had learned of the tapestries in the Bonaparte collection, and he assumed that they were identical with the set woven in Rome.<sup>10</sup> This line of reasoning suggests that he had not seen the tapestries in person, because the Bonaparte tapestries do not include metallic thread, whereas the tapestries woven in the Barberini workshop evidently did. Following this lead, Göbel, who does not seem to have known of the documentation published by Müntz in 1884, made a similar assumption, noting that the execution of the tapestries corresponded to the characteristics of other tapestries from the Barberini workshop woven under the direction of Giacomo della Riviera.<sup>11</sup>

In a study written when four of the tapestries were acquired by the Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, in 1948, Csernyánszky took a more nuanced approach to the evidence, noting that the Bonaparte tapestries could not be one and the same with the set woven at the Barberini manufactory, because they did not include metallic thread. Admitting that the evidence was insufficient for any definitive stylistic or documentary localization of their origin, she suggested that the Bonaparte tapestries may have corresponded to an undocumented set woven from the de Gubernatis cartoons (as she assumed them to be) shortly after they were painted—and before they were used to weave a second set that included metallic thread.<sup>12</sup> Writing in 1981, László also assumed that two sets were woven at the Barberini manufactory but chose instead to attribute the Bonaparte tapestries to a seventeenth-century Brussels workshop.

Subsequent research in the Vatican and Barberini archives suggests that the assumption that all these previous writers made regarding the production of a copy of the Leonine set at the Barberini manufactory is not substantiated by the documentation. Following detailed study of the Barberini documents, De Strobel concluded that the payments made to Giacomo della Riviera and his successor, Gaspare Rocci, related solely to a single set of tapestries that were woven from cartoons by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli, supplied between 1637 and 1641.<sup>13</sup> Although the composition of these designs







was inspired by the Leonine tapestries, and although they are described in the documentation as “imitatione di quelli di Raffaello,” they were conceived in a wholly baroque style, with iconography that related to Pope Urban VIII. Five pieces of this set survive at the Palazzo Venezia, Rome, while seven cartoons survive in part at the Villa Lante di Bagnaia.<sup>14</sup> Although De Strobel acknowledged that the de Gubernatis cartoons may have been made as tapestry cartoons, she noted that the subjects listed in payment to him for this work corresponded to only some, but not all, of the Bonaparte tapestries.<sup>15</sup>

Subsequently, Delmarcel has developed László's suggestion by arguing that the Bonaparte tapestries may in fact have been woven in the Southern Netherlands in the mid-sixteenth century, possibly in Brussels or Enghien.<sup>16</sup> The problem with this theory is that while the Bonaparte tapestries conform to the general composition and iconography of the Raphael-school designs, insofar as we know them from engravings and preparatory drawings, the putti and the swags have a decidedly seventeenth-century appearance, as Csernyánszky had already noted. Similarly, the materials used in the tapestry and the moderate skill with which the figures are represented bear little relation to the much higher quality of weaving that characterizes sixteenth-century Netherlandish production. In contrast, as Göbel noted, it does have much

in common with what is known of the early Barberini production.

Technically, the closest analogy for the Bonaparte tapestries remains the Romanelli tapestries woven at the Barberini manufactory. Although the opportunity to examine examples from the two different sets side by side has not yet occurred, observation of the sets in their diverse locations does indicate that they are woven in an identical palette of silks and wools. An origin in the Barberini manufactory continues to be the most plausible theory yet presented, particularly in view of the remarkable resurgence of interest in the art of Raphael and the High Renaissance artists in Rome during the 1630s, which resulted in the reproduction of many Raphael and Raphael-school works for Urban VIII and his intimates. This renewed interest clearly provided the context in which the de Gubernatis paintings were made and in which Romanelli's homage to the Leonine set was conceived.<sup>17</sup> While most of the Barberini production was intended for Antonio and Francesco Barberini, there is some evidence of production for other Barberini relatives and friends (for which payments would therefore not appear in the Barberini archives).<sup>18</sup>

1. Csernyánszky [1948], pp. 21–22.

2. The subjects are as follows: in Budapest, two putti distracting an ostrich while a third steals feathers from its tail; two putti playing with a harness, while

another picks up a device composed of three ostrich feathers and a diamond ring; three putti playing with a hare, while two ravens attempt to steal feathers from the tail of a peacock; at the Metropolitan Museum, two putti attempting to rescue a baby from a monkey (1995.410.1); six putti dancing around a globe from which a palm tree grows (1995.410.2); in a New York private collection, a putto offering an apple to a lioness, as another putto plays with her cub; location unknown, a putto holding the keys of Saint Peter and a scepter, standing with his foot on a globe beneath the sign of Leo, as two putti approach him carrying chargers piled with gold.

3. Bober and Rubinstein 1987, pp. 88–89.

4. Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 610; Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, pp. 204–5 (with bibliog.); Monbeig-Goguel 1999, p. 498, no. 62.

5. Cordellier and Py 1992, p. 610.

6. Quednau 1981, p. 355.

7. László 1981, p. 67.

8. Quednau in Vatican City 1984, p. 357.

9. “[C]ol disegno de putti ad imitatione di quelli di Raffaello”; Müntz 1878–85, pp. 26–28, 49–50.

10. Müntz 1897, pp. 48–52.

11. Göbel 1928, p. 418.

12. Csernyánszky [1948], pp. 13–16.

13. De Strobel 1989, pp. 33–34.

14. Ibid.; Weddigen 1999a.

15. De Strobel 1989, pp. 33–36. The de Gubernatis copies were all 7 *piedi* high and 8½ *piedi* long; their subjects were described as: “civetta con putti,” “lo struzzo,” “del pavone,” “oche,” “scala,” “li ferri dell’aratro,” “palme,” and “il mondo sulle spalle.” Of these, the second, third, sixth, seventh, and perhaps the eighth may coincide with designs reproduced in the Bonaparte tapestries.

16. Delmarcel 1996, p. 135.

17. Weddigen 1999a, pp. 73–75.

18. Bertrand 2000.





28

28.

## *Adoration of the Infant Jesus with Pope Leo X*

*Modello* for a tapestry, now lost, for the ceremonial *letto* (bed) in the Consistory of the Vatican Palace

Tommaso Vincidor, ca. 1521

Pen and brown ink with brown wash on beige paper, squared in black ink

29.5 x 28.5 cm (11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)

Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris (4269)

PROVENANCE: Acquired by French royal collection; before 1827, recorded in collection of the Louvre.

REFERENCES: Grimm 1874; Grimm 1875, pp. 94–141; Müntz 1878–85, p. 25, n. 4; Müntz 1896; Müntz 1899; Diez 1910, pp. 30–34; Fischel 1934; Fischel 1913–41, vol. 8, p. 375, no. 361; Shearman 1972, p. 42, n. 107; Dacos 1980b, pp. 68–69, 94–95; Joannides 1983, p. 199, no. 267; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 613–15, no. 1011 (with bib-

liog.); Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, p. 119; T. Campbell 1996c.

For a full discussion of the artist, patron, and purpose of this drawing, see above, pages 233–36.

## Massacre of the Innocents

From a twelve-piece set of the *Life of Christ*, known as the *Scuola nuova*

Design attributed to Giulio Romano, ca. 1520–21

Woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1524–31

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread

574 x 365 cm (18 ft. 10 in. x 11 ft. 11 1/2 in.)

7–8 warps per cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City (3863)

**PROVENANCE:** Ca. 1523, probably commissioned by Pope Clement VII from designs prepared for Leo X; 1531, delivered to Rome; 1592, still in use for secret papal consistories; recorded in subsequent Vatican inventories; 1798, removed to France; 1799, exhibited at the Louvre; 1808, taken back to the Vatican by Pius VII; 1838, moved to the west corridor of the Belvedere at the Vatican.

**REFERENCES:** Müntz 1878–85, p. 24; Müntz 1897, p. 38; Pouncey and Gere 1962, pp. 80–81; Hope 1968; Nicolson 1972, pp. 76–77; Shearman 1972, pp. 42–43, n. 107; Adelson in Florence 1980a, p. 46; Dacos 1980b, pp. 79–88; Hope 1984; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 616–24; Delmarcel and Dacos in Brussels and Rome 1995, pp. 294–95.

**CONDITION:** Good.

This tapestry derives from a twelve-piece set of the *Life of Christ*, the principal addition made by Clement VII to the papal tapestry collections during the 1520s. The set was known as the *Scuola nuova* to distinguish it from Raphael's earlier *Acts of the Apostles*, which was called the *Scuola vecchia*. Little documentation regarding the circumstances in which the set was conceived and created has survived. The tapestries appear to have been designed by Raphael's erstwhile assistants after the death of the master in April 1520, though some scenes may incorporate models by Raphael (but not this one). The design of the present *Massacre of the Innocents* panel and two others of the same subject are attributed to Giulio Romano, and the cartoons were probably executed in Brussels by another workshop assistant, Tommaso Vincidor, aided by several unidentified Netherlandish artists. The set was woven by Pieter van Edingen, called van Aelst, who had produced the *Acts*, but production does not seem to have begun until after Clement VII's election as pope in October 1523, when it seems reasonable to suspect that he

may have reactivated a project initiated by his uncle Leo X. Work was completed by 1531, when the set was delivered to Rome and judged by independent specialists as "even richer in gold and silk" than the earlier *Acts*.<sup>1</sup> Only one set of these elaborate tapestries was woven, but the cartoons remained in Brussels where they were to exert considerable influence on contemporary Netherlandish tapestry designers and painters during the succeeding fifteen years.

For a detailed discussion of the patron, design, purpose, chronology, and production of the *Life of Christ* set, see above, pages 237–41.

### Description

The Massacre of the Innocents is an episode from the childhood of Christ as narrated in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (2:16–18) and embellished in the Apocrypha and medieval texts such as the *Golden Legend*. During the Middle Ages, the horrific slaughter of infants at the command of Herod, king of the Jews, was taken as a prefiguration of the persecution of Christ. According to Matthew, Herod was visited by three wise men seeking the newly born king of the Jews so that they might worship him. Racked by jealousy, Herod determined to track down this new "king" and bade the wise men inform him where he too might worship this child. But in dreams the wise men were warned not to return to Herod, and Joseph was urged to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. On discovering the trickery of the wise men, Herod "sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men" (Matthew 2:16).

This wanton murder forms the subject of three narrow panels within the *Life of Christ* set. The focus of the present panel is the tangled group of fighting figures arranged as an inverted triangle. At the bottom a woman falls to the ground as she frantically shields her child from a soldier who lunges down toward her, brandishing his short sword in his left hand. Immediately behind them another soldier plunges his sword into the chest of a second baby as the mother looks on in shock and disbelief, her mouth wide

open in a cry of horror. A third group struggles behind them, and at the top, a soldier holds by the hair a woman with a child, hindering her escape, while another woman at the right, grasping her child, claws this soldier's face and eyes. The interwoven limbs, muscular, twisted bodies, and faces expressing the determination of the predators and the shock and pain of the mothers convey the violence of the scene. The intensity of the moment is reinforced by the friezelike arrangement of the figures in a claustrophobic space defined by the buildings that fill the space behind the struggle. A classical temple at the upper right of the panel is decorated with Ionic columns of variegated marble in reds, blues, and beiges; these alternate with carved niches containing classical sculptures that represent a Roman emperor, Venus with a winged cupid, and Apollo wearing a crown of laurel leaves, passive observers of the mayhem before them. The columns support a deep entablature richly carved with a frieze of acanthus leaves. A second temple, reminiscent of the Pantheon with its dome and pedimented porch, is visible to the left. In the narrow foreground space are patches of lush grass and flowers, including, at the right, a bunch of carnations, an allusion to the blood of Christ. The "picture" is framed by a trompe l'oeil carved and gilded molding set within an outer frame composed of a garland of small leaves, fruits, and flowers.

The two other panels of the *Massacre of the Innocents* depict similar scenes of struggling soldiers, women, and children, though each is set against a different background. One appears to take place in a town square and the other in the open countryside, following the biblical text that the children were slain not only in Bethlehem but in the surrounding regions.

The widely divergent widths of the tapestries and the variation of the light sources in each suggest that the *Life of Christ* tapestries were designed and woven for a specific location.<sup>2</sup> Vasari recorded that the set was made for the "concistorio" at the Vatican Palace.<sup>3</sup> Investigating this issue, Hope suggested that the most likely location for which they were intended was the Sala Regia but that, considering the size of the





tapestries, the set would have had to have been divided into two groups, six representing the childhood of Christ and six of scenes coming after the Crucifixion, that would have been displayed on different occasions. Whether or not the Sala Regia was the location for which they were made, support for the suggestion that they were intended as two separate groups is provided by the 1608 papal inventory, which states that the tapestries were in use for the secret papal consistories held at Christmas and Easter. Considering the subjects of the tapestries, it seems logical to infer that the first six panels were used at Christmas, and the post-Crucifixion scenes for Easter.

The three panels of the *Massacre of the Innocents* would presumably have hung together on one wall as an extended frieze, spanning whatever architectural feature the divisions were intended to accommodate. Their sequence can be surmised from a print of 1544 and a seventeenth-century drawing by an unknown artist that represent all three scenes as a contiguous sequence with the present panel at the left of the group.<sup>4</sup> Hope has pointed out that the print and drawing may have been based on models that showed the design in the reverse direction to the orientation of the final tapestries, in which case the present panel would have been on the right when the three were hung together.<sup>5</sup>

#### Artist and Design

Critical opinion has been divided as to the involvement of Raphael's various assistants in the creation of the *Life of Christ* designs (see above, pp. 239–41). Considering the central role that Giulio Romano took both during Raphael's life and in the continuing activity of the workshop after the master's death, it seems likely that he played a key part in the overall conception and preparations of the designs (although no preparatory drawings in his hand have survived), assisted by other members of the workshop in the execution of the various *modelli*. At any rate, critics have concurred in attributing the design of the *Massacre of the Innocents* panels directly to Giulio; the friezelike composition, the muscular, active figures, the vivid facial expressions (particularly the characteristic rounded open mouths of the women), the elaborate coiffures of the women, and the attention to the architecture all parallel closely the work he executed in Mantua after his move there in 1524. Of the various extant preparatory drawings and *modelli* for the *Life of Christ* series, three relate to the *Massacre of the Innocents* panels (Teyler Museum, Haarlem).<sup>6</sup> These appear to be finished drawings, based on earlier exploratory works and, as such, are attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni who had played an important role developing and refining

Raphael's preliminary sketches for the *Acts of the Apostles* designs. Presumably Penni continued this work with Giulio following the master's death.<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned above, the cartoons for the set were probably painted in Brussels by Tommaso Vincidor (who had traveled there in 1520 to produce the cartoons for Leo X's *Giochi di putti* tapestries) with the help of Netherlandish artists between 1521 and 1524 from *modelli* sent from Rome. Many cartoon fragments have survived, of which the largest, the one for the central composition of catalogue number 29, is now at the Foundling Hospital, London.<sup>8</sup> It was heavily over-painted in the eighteenth century and offers no visual clues to the unaided eye regarding the identity of the author or the circumstances in which it was painted.

THOMAS CAMPBELL AND  
LORRAINE KARAFEL

1. Müntz 1876b, p. 246; Müntz 1883, pp. 141–44.

2. Hope 1984, pp. 326–28.

3. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, p. 644.

4. Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 12, p. 33, no. 7; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 621–22 (L'ouvre, 32422).

5. Hope 1984, p. 332.

6. Pouncey and Gere 1962, pp. 80–81; Hope 1984, p. 331.

7. Pouncey and Gere 1962, p. 81; Hope 1984, p. 331.

8. Nicolson 1972, pp. 51, 76–77.





Detail of cat. no. 29







# Patronage and Production in Northern Europe, 1520-60

Nothing demonstrates the central role of tapestry in European court life during the Renaissance more clearly than the preparations made for the meeting between Henry VIII, king of England, and Francis I, king of France, during June 1520. The meeting of the Field of Cloth of Gold, so called for the rich textiles displayed, took place on the border of northern France and the English pale of Calais. Fueled by the competitive spirit of the young kings, the two courts mustered the greatest displays of magnificence of which they were capable, and the combined number of people in the retinues of the courts has been estimated in excess of six thousand.<sup>1</sup> Henry's lord chamberlain was instructed to transport all of the king's richest tapestries and cloth of gold several weeks in advance, and the scale of the ensuing removals is suggested by a payment for carriage of fifty-two loads of the king's wardrobe stuff in Calais. In the months leading up to the meeting a temporary palace was

built in Guînes for the English king, the appearance of which is recorded in contemporary descriptions and in a schematic painting made some years later (fig. 106). The interior rooms were lit by clerestory windows, below which there was an elaborate cornice decorated with heraldic devices. The space below the cornice was hung with "riche and marveilous clothes of Arras wroughte of golde and silke, compassed of many auncient stories, with which clothes of Arras, every wall and chamber were hanged, and all the wyndowes so richely covered, that it passed all other sightes before seen."<sup>2</sup> Within the suites provided for Henry, his wife, Catherine, his sister Mary, and his lord chancellor, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, tapestries, heraldic embroideries, and cloths of gold were arranged to dramatize the hierarchy of the chambers, the most precious being hung in the innermost chambers of the king and queen. The great halls were also draped with gold-woven tapestries, some purchased from Pieter van Aelst earlier that



Fig. 106. *The Field of Cloth of Gold*, ca. 1545. Oil on canvas, 168.9 x 347.3 cm. The Royal Collection, Windsor

Opposite: Fig. 105. Detail of cat. no. 40: *The Killing of the Wild Boar (Month of December)* from the *Hunts of Maximilian*

spring. Tapestries were also used for the outdoor ceremonies. When Henry and Francis met at the Vale of Ardres on June 7, the tent where they convened was "hanged of the richest Arras, newly contrived and made, that ever before was seen."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the stage on which Cardinal Wolsey celebrated mass before the two kings on June 23 was decorated with rich embroideries, and the enclosure in which the royal parties sat was hung with tapestries.<sup>4</sup>

Two years later a second meeting of comparable import took place, this time between Henry and Charles V, the young Habsburg emperor, who had traveled to London to meet him. Again, this event took place against the most sumptuous displays of Tudor splendor. Charles first stopped at Greenwich Palace, where the apartments were "so richely hanged, that the Spanyardes wondered at it."<sup>5</sup> During the subsequent progress through the City of London, "all the stretes were richely hanged with clothes of golde, silver, velvet and Arras." Following this grand entrance, the emperor was housed at Blackfriars while his nobles were lodged in the new palace at Bridewell. The two were connected by a gallery "whiche was very long, and that gallery and all other galleries ther wer hanged with Arras." The furnishings and hangings of Henry's palace were equally sumptuous, but our source for these descriptions took the easy route on this occasion, with the claim that "my witte is to dull to describe them."<sup>6</sup>

Although the foregoing descriptions are flavored by the propagandistic intent of the author to celebrate Henry VIII, details of the purchases made in the year before the Guînes meeting confirm that Henry's tapestries were indeed of extraordinary quality and richness.<sup>7</sup> The lavish display of Tudor magnificence must have contributed to the keen rivalry that characterized relations among the English, French, and Habsburg courts for the next thirty years. The enormous expenditure that these monarchs and other contemporary patrons lavished on tapestry during the second quarter of the sixteenth century stimulated the Brussels manufactories to heights of artistic and technical achievements that have never been surpassed. This essay provides a brief overview of some of the leading patrons of the day and of the character of the works they commissioned or bought.

#### ENGLISH COURT PATRONAGE

It is convenient to start with Henry VIII, the oldest of the three rival kings. On his accession in 1509 Henry must have inherited a collection of some five hundred tapestries, including "antique" pieces dating from the late fourteenth century and more recent purchases made by Edward IV and Henry VII from Pasquier Grenier and Pieter van Aelst. Shortly after his accession, Henry appointed van Aelst as his "arrasmaker" with special privileges to

import "cloths of arras and tapestry" to England. Documentation relating to Henry's acquisitions is partial during the early years of his reign, although some substantial purchases are recorded; for example, the rich gold-woven tapestries acquired in 1514 for his sister Mary, as part of the dowry for her marriage to Louis XII of France; or the 108 tapestries (with a total surface area of 1,520 sq. m) that were purchased in 1516 for the decoration of the Manor of Beaulieu (subsequently known as Newhall) that Henry had recently acquired. Both these purchases were delegated to court officials who traveled to the Netherlands to select tapestries from available stock. However, a number of highly expensive purchases from Pieter van Aelst and his agents during 1517 and 1519 indicate that Henry was also, on occasion, directly involved in the choice and purchase of finer tapestries.<sup>8</sup>

Henry's appreciation of the tapestry medium must have been shaped during these years by the influence of his principal minister, Cardinal Wolsey. Of humble origin, Wolsey had extraordinary ability and untiring energy as an administrator, which led to his rapid promotion through successive ecclesiastic and court offices, culminating with his appointment as cardinal and lord chancellor in 1515. With the profits of his labors Wolsey made extensive additions during the late 1510s to York Place, his London residence, and Hampton Court, his principal country seat. Having appropriated at least two hundred tapestries from his ecclesiastic predecessors, Wolsey also spent liberally on new tapestries, using the contacts that he acquired through his appointment as bishop of Tournai following the English capture of this town in 1513. In October 1519 the Venetian Sebastiano Giustiniani reported to the Signoria that Wolsey "had a very fine palace, where one traverses eight rooms before reaching his audience chamber and they are all hung with tapestry, which is changed once a week."<sup>9</sup> Following the return of the English court from Guînes in 1520, and possibly inspired by the splendor of that occasion, Wolsey ordered a further twenty-two sets (comprising more than two hundred tapestries) made for particular rooms within his palaces. These were delivered in December 1521 and April 1522. Although this order was handled by the London merchant Richard Gresham, who traveled to the Netherlands to make the necessary arrangements, Wolsey's involvement in the matter is reflected by the fact that almost all of these sets were of religious subjects, a choice that was presumably intended to promote his ecclesiastic status in the eyes of his contemporaries. Many English nobles were enthusiastic tapestry patrons, but Wolsey's expenditure on tapestries was unparalleled—in the course of his life he acquired more than six hundred.<sup>10</sup>





Fig. 107. View of the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace with the *Story of Abraham* tapestries on display, 2000

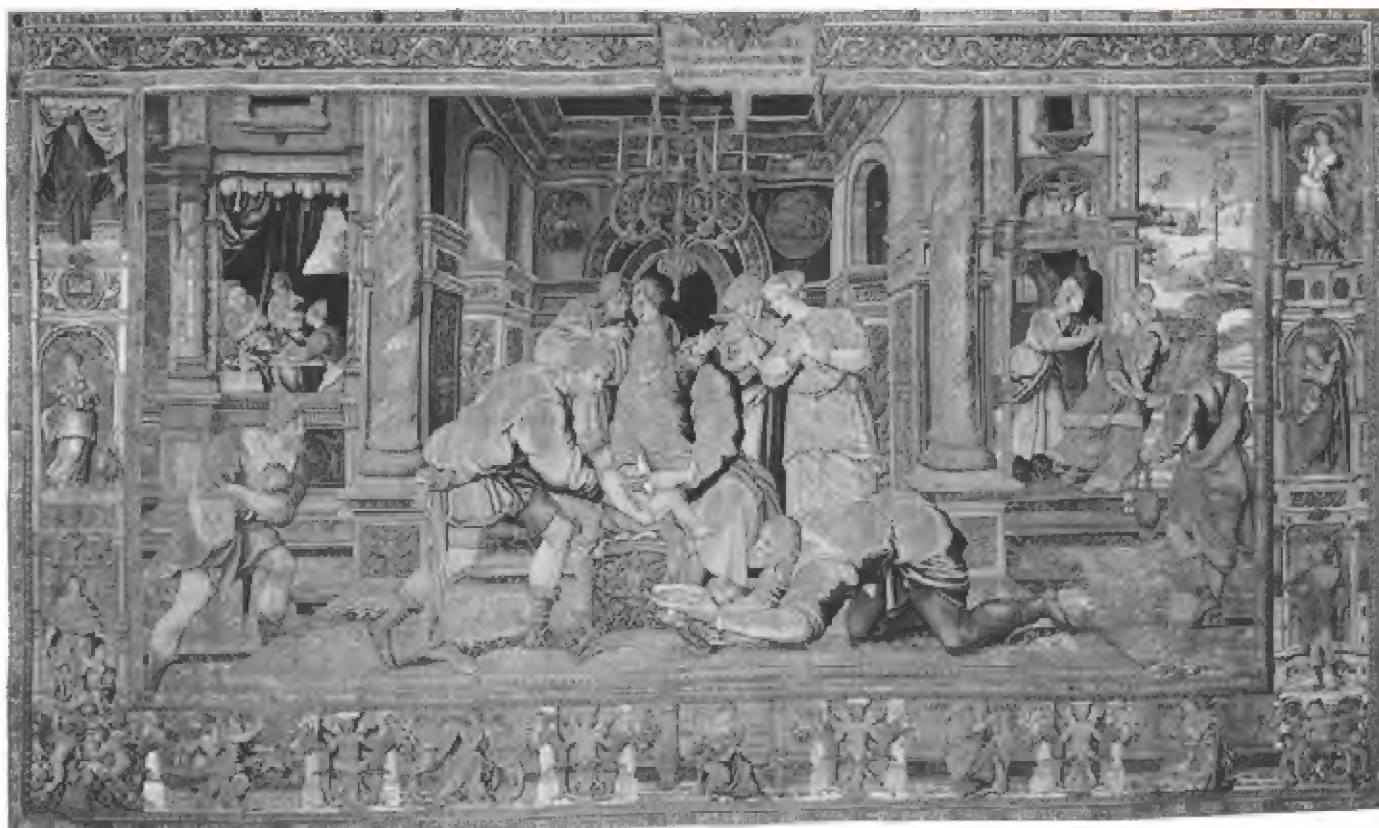


Fig. 108. *The Circumcision of Isaac* from the *Story of Abraham*. Tapestry design here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, woven in the workshop of Willem de Kempeneer, Brussels, ca. 1540–42. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 482 x 805 cm. The Royal Collection, Hampton Court



Fig. 109. *June* from the *Hunts of Maximilian*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, ca. 1530. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 420 x 582 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

Although the tapestries purchased by Wolsey were primarily of religious subjects, a number of his acquisitions also reflect the nascent humanist interests of English patrons. Notable among these was the set of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* that he acquired in 1523 from the estate of Thomas Ruthal, bishop of Durham (of which various pieces survive at Hampton Court). At an unknown date Wolsey also acquired a second, even finer weaving of this design, with an associated group of (separate) armorial borders carrying the arms of the king of England. This was probably a royal acquisition that passed to Wolsey as a perquisite. Forfeit to the crown in 1530, this set disappeared from the royal collection in the seventeenth century, but it is possible that three pieces of this design that survive at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig. 69), may derive from that set.<sup>11</sup>

The character of Henry's acquisitions shifted from the mid-1520s as he became embroiled in the sequence of events now

collectively known as the English Reformation. Thwarted by the pope's refusal to grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Henry initiated a series of reforms that culminated with the repudiation of the papacy, the establishment of the monarch as the head of the Church of England, and the dissolution of the monasteries. These events were accompanied by a broad range of written propaganda supporting the king's cause. Painting and engraving seem to have played little part in promoting the Reformation, but tapestries may have been more important in the context of the English court. Henry could not commission overtly propagandistic subjects because the leading workshops were in the domain of his arch rival Charles V (who strongly opposed Henry's divorce from his aunt Catherine and deplored the break between the Church of England and Rome). Nonetheless, he spent enormous sums during the late 1520s, 1530s, and early 1540s on gold-woven tapestries depicting Old Testament heroes and patriarchs such as



David, Abraham (figs. 107, 108; see cat. no. 48), and Joshua and the New Testament Saint Paul (see cat. nos. 45, 46). These were the models with whom Henry increasingly identified in his newly defined role as the head of the English church and prophet to his own people. As such, these purchases appear to have been intended to promote these associations in the arena of the Tudor court.<sup>12</sup>

If tapestry was primarily a tool of ostentation and suggestion for Henry, acquisitions of Italian designs such as reweavings of the Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Grotesques of Leo X* (*Triumphs of the Gods*; see cat. no. 26) during the early 1540s suggest that it was also an important conduit for Continental aesthetics to the English court during the later years of Henry's rule.<sup>13</sup> Swelled with appropriations from the victims of his tyranny (including Wolsey's tapestries), the English royal collection numbered more than two thousand pieces by the time of Henry's death, including some two hundred large gold-woven tapestries in whose purchase Henry must have been directly involved.<sup>14</sup>

#### HABSBURG PATRONAGE

If the magnificence of the Tudor court impressed the Spanish visitors in 1520, that of Charles's court was to become more than a match for it in the following years. The foundation for the most powerful dynasty of sixteenth-century Europe had been established with the marriage of Joanna, daughter of the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, to Philip the Handsome, son of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy. Their son Charles inherited the Burgundian territories on Philip's death in 1506 and became king of Spain in 1516, on Ferdinand's death. With Maximilian's death in 1519 Charles's inheritance was complete, and he was elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in June 1519. Raised in Mechelen under the tutelage of their aunt Margaret of Austria, Charles and his siblings grew up close to the center of high-quality tapestry production, and Margaret was herself an active tapestry patron. With this example before him, Charles seems to have been finely attuned to the tapestry medium, taking far greater interest in it than in any of the other arts, and spending much more money on it. As duke of Burgundy, he inherited the remains of the great Burgundian collection, a heritage that he evidently prized. Earlier sets such as the *Story of Gideon* were restored and continued to be used for ceremonial occasions such as meetings of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Charles's activity as a patron is somewhat masked by his long absences from the Netherlands, but his sister Mary of Hungary, who served as regent of the Netherlands between 1531 and 1555, appears to have acted as his proxy in this regard.<sup>15</sup> Acquisitions spanned a broad spectrum of quality, from mediocre sets in which the direct intervention of

Charles or Mary is unlikely, to gold-woven sets in which they must have been involved because of the high cost. The most significant additions to the Habsburg collection during the first decade or so of Charles's reign were the *Honors* (see cat. no. 17)—the enormous allegorical celebration of the Habsburg emperors (Charles paid for this set in 1526 with the dowry he received on his marriage to Isabella of Portugal); the *Battle of Pavia* (see cat. nos. 35, 36), depicting the defeat of the French army at Pavia in 1525; and the so-called *Hunts of Maximilian* (fig. 109; see cat. nos. 37–40), which presented lifesize portrayals of Charles, his sister and brother, and members of their court, hunting and feasting in realistic settings in and around Brussels. The circumstances in which the latter two sets were conceived are not entirely clear. The *Pavia* set was presented to Charles as a gift by the Brabant States General in 1531. The *Hunts*, whose design can be dated between 1530 and 1533 on the basis of internal evidence, is undocumented before its appearance in the French royal collection in the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, as both sets were designed by Bernaert van Orley, and as both must have required the direct participation of many members of the Habsburg court in the elaboration of the iconographic programs and the organization of portraits, there can be little question that the *Pavia* set was developed with the knowledge and participation of the Habsburg court, while the *Hunts* may well have been instigated jointly by Charles and Mary (she was a keen huntswoman), perhaps following her appointment as his regent in 1531.



Fig. 110. *The Review of the Troops at Barcelona* from the *Conquest of Tunis*. Tapestry designed by Jan Vermeyen, woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1548–54. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 525 x 712 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

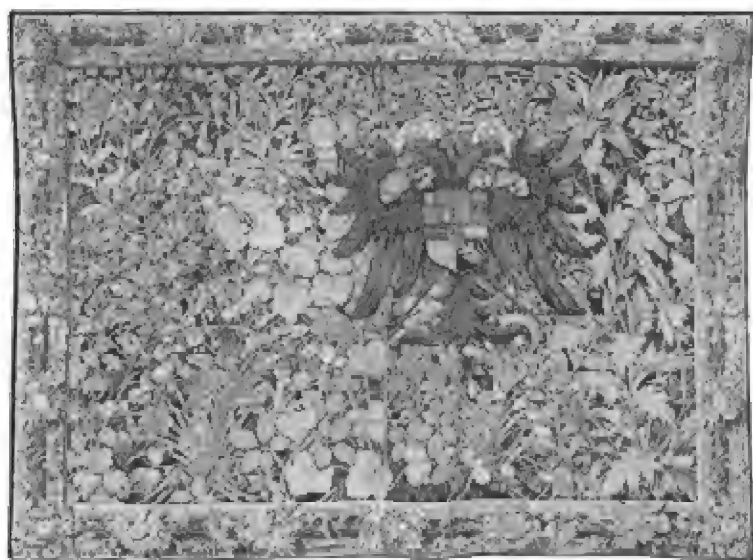


Fig. 111. *Verdure with the Arms of Charles V*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1540. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 200 x 272 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Charles's involvement as a tapestry patron during the 1530s is also largely undocumented, but he may have been responsible for the conception of the van Orley *Foundation of Rome* series, which celebrated by proxy Charles's foundation of a new empire (fig. 143).<sup>16</sup> The crowning achievement of his tapestry patronage was the twelve-piece *Conquest of Tunis* set (fig. 110; see cat. no. 50) executed between 1548 and 1554 (in which year it was displayed in England on the occasion of the marriage of Mary Tudor and Prince Philip of Spain), from designs by Jan Vermeyen, an artist who had accompanied Charles on this military campaign to northern Africa in 1535. The emperor's letters demonstrate the direct personal interest he took in the development of the project—one of the largest and most ambitious tapestry commissions of the century—and his frustration that he could not visit Brussels to see its progress.

More than any of his rivals, Charles was highly peripatetic, traveling through his vast dominions. Deposits of tapestries were maintained at his principal residences in Brussels and Madrid, but he was always accompanied by a *Removing Wardrobe*. An inventory of this, taken in 1544, records fifteen sets comprising ninety-six tapestries, including major ensembles like the *Honors* and others acquired for him by Mary of Hungary, such as the eight-piece set of the *Story of Joshua* after a design by Pieter Coecke, purchased in 1544.<sup>17</sup>

The distinction between Charles's tapestry patronage and that of his sister Mary is difficult to determine, but she was evidently a keen patron of the Brussels workshops in her own right. Following Charles's abdication in 1555, Mary also retired to Spain, where she died in 1558. The inventory taken after her death lists thirty-seven

sets, numbering more than two hundred and fifty pieces, many of very high quality.<sup>18</sup> These were left to her niece, Charles's daughter, Joanna of Portugal (1533–1573), from whom they passed to Philip II in 1571.<sup>19</sup> Charles's younger sister, Catherine (1507–1578), who married John III, king of Portugal, was also an active patron. Having inherited thirty-one valuable tapestries from her mother, Joanna of Castile, Catherine and her husband made many purchases of Netherlandish tapestries, including an eleven-piece *Romulus and Remus* in 1531, and a number of custom-made sets, such as the *Spheres*, probably from designs by van Orley or an artist in his circle, which include portrayals of John and Catherine in the guise of Jupiter and Juno and a depiction of the Portuguese dominions as established by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 (fig. 112). Further acquisitions of Old Testament subjects were made in the 1550s.<sup>20</sup>

Following Charles's abdication, the main body of the Habsburg collection passed to his son Philip II (1527–1598), whose collection is documented by an inventory taken at his death in 1598.<sup>21</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century the Habsburg collection—combining the inherited collections of the Burgundian dynasty and of Charles and of Mary, along with purchases made by Philip in his own right—numbered some seven hundred tapestries, many of



Fig. 112. *Earth under the Protection of Jupiter and Juno* from the *Spheres*. Tapestry design attributed to Bernaert van Orley, woven at the order of Joris Vezeleer, Brussels, ca. 1530–35. Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 344 x 314 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



superlative quality. Today 183 of these works, approximately one-quarter of the total, survive in the Spanish royal collection in Madrid.<sup>22</sup> Delmarcel demonstrated in an analysis of the 1598 inventory of this collection that approximately forty percent of the pieces were verdure, but almost thirty percent, including many of the collection's finest pieces, represented secular mythological and historical subjects. During his visits to the Netherlands in 1549–50 and 1555–59, Philip made important purchases from Willem de Pannemaker, the leading merchant of the day, including sets of the *Apocalypse* (see cat. no. 51), the *Story of Noah*, and the *Metamorphoses* (known as the *Poesia*; see cat. no. 49).<sup>23</sup> When the first sets of the *Apocalypse* and *Noah* were largely destroyed in a shipwreck in 1559, replacement sets were woven. The *Noah* set was woven in 1563 with new pictorial border designs featuring the four elements, landscapes, and zoological specimens drawn from Philip's menagerie in Madrid. Correspondence between Philip and Pannemaker demonstrates that the weaver felt that the pictorial border designs would not work and that Philip overrode his objections.

Charles's two natural daughters, Margaret of Parma and Joanna of Portugal, also shared the familial love of tapestry. The inventories of Margaret's possessions taken at Ortona and Aquila in the Abruzzi after her death list more than two hundred tapestries,

many acquired during the period when she served as regent of the Netherlands from 1559 to 1567. For example, in anticipation of the marriage of her son Alessandro Farnese to Mary of Portugal in Brussels in 1565, she purchased more than seventy tapestries in Antwerp, including an eight-piece set of *Scipio*, five of *Orpheus*, and sixty verdure, some with mythological figures.<sup>24</sup> Joanna's possessions, inventoried at her death in 1573, included approximately sixty-five tapestries, mostly sets of Old Testament subjects such as *Esther*, *Susanna*, *Sheba*, *Abraham*, and *Jacob*.<sup>25</sup>

The lead set by Charles, his siblings, and his children was followed by the Habsburg courtiers. The inventory of Cardinal Erard de la Marck, prince-bishop of Liège, lists more than three hundred tapestries by the time of his death, including a reweaving (considerably simplified) of the *Honors*.<sup>26</sup> Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, first archbishop of Mechelen, minister of Charles V and Philip II, and principal adviser to Margaret of Parma during her tenure as regent of the Netherlands, was also keenly interested in the medium. Based in Brussels, he acted as an intermediary between Philip II and the merchant Willem de Pannemaker and advised other European nobles such as Ercole Gonzaga about tapestry acquisitions. He also made a number of purchases on his own behalf, including a set of garden tapestries woven by the



Fig. 113. *The Battle of Mühlberg (?)* from the *Military Victories of the Duke of Alba*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, between 1567 and 1673. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 380 x 565 cm. Palacio de Liria, Madrid

Pannemaker workshop during the early 1560s which survives in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum).<sup>27</sup> Following Granvelle's relocation to Naples in 1564, his correspondence with Maximilian Morillon, his representative in Brussels, provides an important source of information about both his own commissions and the tapestry market in general.<sup>28</sup> Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, third duke of Alba (1508–1583), the ruthless general who commanded Philip II's troops during the religious persecution and ensuing war that ravaged the Netherlands during the late 1560s and 1570s, took advantage of his tenure in the Netherlands to enrich his tapestry collection, purchasing a reweaving of the *Conquest of Tunis* set and commissioning Pannemaker about 1568 to make a set of tapestries glorifying his exploits, among them the 1547 battle of Mühlberg (fig. 113).<sup>29</sup>

#### FRENCH COURT PATRONAGE

The large and sophisticated market for tapestries among French patrons, both secular and ecclesiastic during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, continued in the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century, with the French crown taking the lead. Indeed, Francis I became one of the most innovative tapestry patrons of the era.<sup>30</sup> Like Henry VIII and Charles V, he inherited an impressive collection of tapestries, and his appreciation of tapestry as the medium of princely splendor would have been encouraged by the displays and purchases made by his mother, Louise of Savoy, by Louis XII, and by leading nobles and ecclesiastics of the day (such as Georges and Jacques d'Amboise). His precocious interest in the medium is evident in the full-scale woven version of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* (fig. 67), which, on the basis of heraldic analysis, appears to have been made before his accession in 1515 or very early in his reign.<sup>31</sup> This was Francis's first use of tapestry to duplicate an outstanding work of art by a leading Italian artist, an important (but not exclusive) motivation in his subsequent patronage. Francis's fascination with all things Italian is well documented. He was raised in a court that was oriented toward Italy because of the French occupation of Lombardy beginning in 1499, and his personal experiences in Italy in 1515 and 1524–25 left an indelible impression on his artistic tastes. Years later Benvenuto Cellini recorded Francis bragging of his firsthand knowledge of the greatest works by the greatest Italian masters.<sup>32</sup> Francis's attempts to attract Raphael and Michelangelo to the French court came to nothing, but Leonardo accepted the invitation, living in France from 1516 until his death in 1519. Although Francis's territorial ambitions in Italy were quashed at the battle of Pavia, his yearnings subsequently found a sublimated expression in his voracious acquisition of Italian art and artists through agents such as Pietro Aretino. Giulio Romano refused enticements

to relocate but sent his pupil Primaticcio, whose collaboration with Rosso and other Italian artists at Fontainebleau irrevocably changed the character of French art.

Returning from captivity in Spain, Francis dramatically intensified his activity as a tapestry patron (perhaps as a result of exposure to the Spanish royal collection), and he was to make a spate of expensive purchases in the late 1520s and the early 1530s.<sup>33</sup> In 1532 he acquired four pieces of a set of the *Story of Scipio* that had been woven as a speculative venture after designs by Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni (see cat. nos. 41–43). The circumstances in which this set came to Francis's attention are unclear, but he bought the first completed pieces and commissioned a further eighteen.<sup>34</sup> This ambitious ensemble, which measured almost 145 meters in length and cost the enormous sum of 23,448 *écus d'or soleil* (more than 50,000 livres), was completed by 1535. The first four pieces were displayed at Boulogne in October 1532 when Francis hosted a banquet for Henry VIII. When they were displayed again at another banquet held in the Louvre in February 1533, the Venetian ambassador to the French court recorded a conversation with the French king in which Francis discussed the comparative merits of the Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* belonging to the pope and the *Scipio* designs. The account provides a fascinating glimpse of Francis as a tapestry connoisseur and confirms the extent to which the medium was a matter of interest and discussion at the highest levels.

The *Story of Scipio* was just a beginning, and in the following years Francis was to spend enormous sums on tapestry. He was the first patron to acquire a copy of the *Acts of the Apostles* (a payment for three pieces was made in 1534) and the only patron known to have commissioned a duplicate weaving of part of a state-bed ensemble that Vincidor had designed for Leo X after designs by Raphael (see fig. 96).<sup>35</sup> Nor was his interest limited to Italian designs. He appears to have owned the editio princeps of several of the most important Netherlandish series of the day, including the *Story of Saint Paul* (purchased in 1533) and the *Story of Joshua* (1538), both from designs by Pieter Coecke van Aelst. He also acquired a set of tapestries based on paintings by Hieronymus Bosch, of which a duplicate set survives in the Spanish royal collection (fig. 114), and sent new designs created by artists at his court to be executed in Brussels.<sup>36</sup> The culmination of Francis's interest in tapestry was the creation of a workshop at Fontainebleau in the early 1540s, of which the only certain product is a six-piece set of tapestries that represent, in perfect trompe l'oeil, the painted and plaster decorations executed by Rosso and Primaticcio in the Galerie François I at Fontainebleau (see cat. no. 55). This set is equal in quality to the finest contemporary Brussels tapestries.





Fig. 114. *The Garden of Earthly Delights* from the *Visions of Saint Antony*. Tapestry designed after a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, woven in Brussels, ca. 1540. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 288 x 490 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

After his accession in 1547, Henry II followed his father's example, making significant acquisitions from Brussels merchants, such as the twenty-six-piece *Story of Psyche* purchased from the merchant Joris Vezeleer in 1550. Destroyed in 1798 but known in part from seventeenth-century copies made at the Paris manufactories, this series was based on engravings by the Master of the Die after Raphael. It may originally have been conceived for Francis I as it featured crowned F's with a salamander in an elaborate border of flower swags held by grisaille angels.<sup>37</sup> Henry also commissioned a set of the *Story of Samson*, a project for which the cartoons were being painted at the time of his death in 1559. Like his father, Henry also extended his patronage to local workshops. He may have initiated the commission of a set of tapestries made in Paris of the *Story of Diana* (see fig. 203), which celebrated his mistress Diane de Poitiers and which appears to have been made for her château at Anet. Activity at Fontainebleau may have continued during the 1550s, and Henry made a longer-lasting initiative by establishing a workshop at the Hôpital de la Trinité, whose mission was to take in orphans and poor children and to train them in various trades, including tapestry making.

Following Henry's death, his widow, Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589), also played an interesting role as a tapestry patron. She was probably responsible for the first translation into tapestry of a group of designs celebrating the classical widow Artemisia who erected the mausoleum at Halicarnassus in memory of her husband, Mausolus. This flattering allusion to Catherine was based on designs Antoine Caron created for a manuscript which Nicolas

Houel dedicated to her in 1562. The designs were adapted and rewoven many times at the Paris manufactories established by Henry IV in the early seventeenth century.

Catherine may also have been responsible for commissioning the throne baldachin with portrayals of Pluto and Proserpina, which Charles III of Lorraine acquired shortly after his marriage to Claude, Catherine's daughter, in 1559 (cat. no. 54). Charles himself was subsequently to become an important patron of the Brussels manufactories. Later in her reign Catherine was also responsible for commissioning the so-called *Valois fêtes* tapestries, which depict festivals held at the courts of Catherine and Henry III of France. These were woven in Brussels between 1582 and 1585, after designs by Caron and cartoons by Lucas de Heere.<sup>38</sup>

With the royal example before them, the French nobility were as active as tapestry patrons as their English and Spanish counterparts, acquiring high-quality tapestries from the Netherlands and mediocre and low-quality tapestries from Paris, Aubusson, and other provincial workshops.<sup>39</sup> For example, the inventories of the constable of France Anne de Montmorency (1493–1567), builder of Écouen, list many tapestries at his Parisian property.<sup>40</sup> Tapestry was so ubiquitous in noble French households that the architect Philibert de L'Orme complained that it was pointless to provide elaborate architectural features for interior doors since everything was hidden by tapestries.<sup>41</sup> The tradition of French ecclesiastics commissioning choir tapestries for their benefices also continued unabated during the sixteenth century, with sets coming both from the Netherlands and from Paris. Indeed, religious commissions



Fig. 115. *Anne de Montmorency Receiving the Offering of a Book*. Illumination from the *Discours of Cicero*, France, 1531. National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg

must have been the lifeblood of many French workshops. The character of these commissions varied extensively, from the conservative designs of sets of the *Life of the Virgin* and the *Life of Saint Remi* that were given to Reims Cathedral between 1530 and 1532 (see fig. 116) by archbishop Robert de Lenoncourt,<sup>42</sup> to much more innovative designs such as those of the *Story of Saint Mamas* (see cat. no. 56) supplied by Jean Cousin the elder to Claude de Longwy, cardinal of Givry, which were woven in Paris in 1544–45 by Pierre Blasse I or II and Jacques Langlois.

#### GERMANIC AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN COURT PATRONAGE

This brief overview must also include the numerous commissions that came to the Netherlandish workshops from Germanic and central European clients. A set of *Passion* tapestries, now in Dresden,

probably from designs by van Orley which were based, in part, on compositions by Dürer, indicates the quality of some of the tapestries purchased by Albert, elector of Saxony, in the late 1520s or early 1530s.<sup>43</sup> Another keen client of the Netherlandish workshops was Ottheinrich, count palatine of Neuberg and elector palatine of the Rhine, who made substantial purchases of Netherlandish tapestries to decorate his palace at Schloss Neuberg, rebuilt in Renaissance style during the 1530s and 1540s, and for the Ottheinrichsbau built in Heidelberg from 1556. His collection of more than one hundred Netherlandish tapestries included duplicate weavings from existing design series such as the *Honors* (of which fragments survive in Heidelberg and Nuremberg), *Phaeton*, *Abraham*, and *Joseph*, as well as a number of unique designs featuring his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and his own genealogy (fig. 117). Some of these may have been woven by Netherlandish weavers that Ottheinrich encouraged to settle at his court, where a set of the *Battle of Vienna* was produced between 1539 and 1542.<sup>44</sup>

One of the most iconographically arresting tapestries produced for a German patron during the sixteenth century is the dynastic *Croy* tapestry (fig. 118), woven in 1554 for Prince Philip I of Pommern-Wolgast. This depicts Martin Luther pointing from a pulpit toward a figure of the crucified Christ, with twenty-three



Fig. 116. *The Nativity* from the *Life of the Virgin*. Tapestry woven in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1530. Wool and silk, 500 x 500 cm. Cathedral Museum, Reims



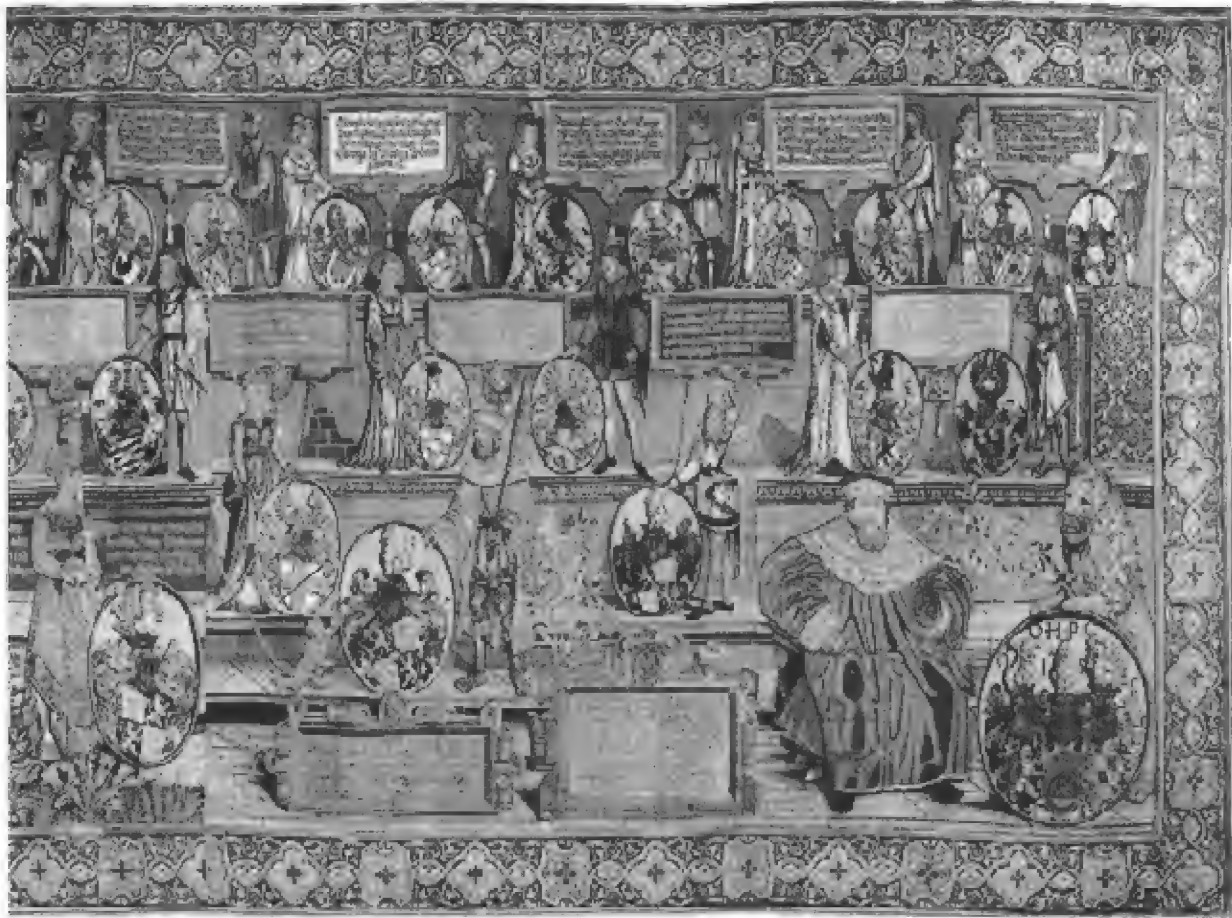


Fig. 117. Detail of the *Genealogy of Ottheinrich*. Tapestry woven in Brussels (?), ca. 1550. Wool, linen, and metallic thread, 431 x 958 cm (whole tapestry). Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich



Fig. 118. *The Croy-Tappich*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Peter Heyman, Stettin, 1554. Wool and silk, 446 x 690 cm. Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Greifswald, Germany



Fig. 119. View of the Hall of Senators in Wawel Castle hung with the *Story of Noah* tapestries purchased by King Sigismund II Augustus in the early 1550s. Wawel Royal Castle, Kraków

members of Philip's family portrayed below.<sup>45</sup> Woven by the Netherlandish weaver Peter Heyman (Heymans), who worked in Stettin between 1547 and 1566, this is one of the most ambitious of a group of tapestries woven by Netherlandish weavers who migrated from the Netherlands to Germany to escape religious persecution during the 1540s and 1550s.<sup>46</sup>

Other important commissions came to the Netherlandish manufactories from the Polish court. Sigismund I purchased more than one hundred tapestries from Antwerp (1526) and Bruges (1533), many of them armorials, to decorate the refurbished interiors of Wawel Castle in Kraków. His son, Sigismund II Augustus, was an even more significant patron. Following his coronation in 1548, he purchased more than one hundred forty high-quality tapestries including sets of the *First Parents*, *Noah* (see cat. no. 52), the *Tower of Babel*, and *Moses*, armorials, and forty-four pieces with exotic animals in landscapes (see cat. no. 53). One hundred thirty-six of these tapestries survive in situ. The scale and number of

these commissions evidently required the collaboration of several of the leading Brussels tapestry merchants of the day, and the workshop marks of Pieter van Aelst the younger, Jan van Tieghem, and Frans Ghieteels appear, along with other unidentified marks, in the selvages of the tapestries.<sup>47</sup>

#### ITALIAN COURT PATRONAGE

The tapestry commissions of Popes Leo X and Clement VII in the early sixteenth century resulted in a series of innovative and very costly sets that played a central part in the display of papal magnificence at the Vatican. The papal example had a twofold impact on Italian tapestry patronage. First, work with Raphael on the papal tapestry designs gave his assistants, particularly Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga, an expertise that they applied for other patrons during the late 1520s, 1530s, and 1540s. At the same time, the papal commissions provided a shining example of the potential of tapestry as a tool of magnificence and propaganda



that was to have a profound influence on Italian patrons. During the following years, the Italian nobility were among the leading patrons of the Netherlandish workshops. While enormous quantities of the tapestries shipped to Italy by merchants like the Affaitadi were made from existing cartoons, discriminating patrons like the Gonzaga and the Farnese also commissioned new series from designs sent from Italy. The high prestige attached to tapestry patronage also revived the practice of an earlier generation of Italian rulers, resulting in the development of a number of new workshops in Italy during the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

After the Sack of Rome in 1527 Clement returned to a shattered city, a circumstance that precluded further commissions during the few remaining years of his reign. Evidence is ambiguous regarding the extent to which his successor, Alessandro Farnese, elected Pope Paul III in 1534, shared his predecessors' interest in tapestry. No major commissions are documented, but confirmation that he was appreciative of the medium is reflected by the gift that he received in 1534 from Cardinal Erard de la Marck of a tapestry of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (based on an engraving by Raphael, the cartoon attributed to Lambert Lombard; Vatican collection); and by a panel of the *Conversion of the Centurion Cornelius by Saint Peter* (fig. 188), which was left to him in 1548 on the death of its original patron, Cardinal Agostino Trivulzio.<sup>48</sup> The only certain commission by Paul III of which we have evidence was that of the early 1540s to Perino del Vaga to design a tapestry to hang below Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* fresco in the Sistine Chapel (see fig. 73). Further evidence of the continuing interest of the papal court in tapestry is, however, provided by Alessandro's natural son, Pier Luigi, duke of Castro. According to Michelangelo Biondo and Vasari, Pier Luigi commissioned Salviati to paint cartoons for a set of the *Story of Alexander*, which was then woven in the Low Countries in the late 1530s.<sup>49</sup> No other documentation of this project has survived, but it has generally been linked with a single tapestry of the *Sacrifice of Alexander* (fig. 120). There has been considerable dispute as to whether this tapestry was one of the group supposedly made in the Netherlands or a later copy of a piece made at the Florentine manufactory in the 1580s. Recent study indicates that it was indeed woven in Flanders and thus provides intriguing evidence of the skill of Netherlandish weavers in reproducing Italian cartoons with great faithfulness to the original character and coloration of the design.<sup>50</sup> Further evidence of the interaction between the Farnese and Brussels is found in a letter of February 1540 to Giovanni Poggi, papal nuncio in Brussels, in which Pier Luigi stated his intention to have tapestries (subject unspecified) woven by Giovanni van Aelst (presumably related to the merchant Pieter van Aelst and his son of the same name). Giovanni is described as somebody who is highly



Fig. 120. *The Sacrifice of Alexander*. Tapestry designed by Francesco Salviati, probably woven in Brussels, ca. 1540. Wool and silk, 385 x 315 cm. Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples

esteemed by the Farnese family, which suggests that this was not the first such transaction between the Farnese and Brussels. The idiosyncratic style and iconographic elements of a little-known set of *Apollo and the Four Seasons* in grotesque surrounds (see cat. no. 44) suggest that it may have been designed for the Farnese by Perino del Vaga in the mid-1540s.

Other Italian Maecenases, particularly those associated with Charles V, were equally innovative. Foremost among these was Andrea I Doria, admiral and ruler of the Republic of Genoa, who purchased from Netherlandish stock and commissioned new designs from Perino del Vaga for his palazzo in Genoa (see pp. 351–60). The Este had been among the foremost tapestry patrons of the fifteenth century, purchasing large and expensive sets both from the Netherlands and from workshops established by Netherlandish weavers in Ferrara. This tradition was maintained during the sixteenth century by Ercole II d'Este, fourth duke of Ferrara, who established a native workshop in 1536 that supplied him with more than twenty sets of tapestries over the next twenty-five years (see pp. 483–88). Given this close source, he appears to have made few

purchases from the Netherlandish industry. In contrast his brother, Ippolito II d'Este, patron of such artists as Benvenuto Cellini and Titian, became one of the most active patrons of the Netherlandish industry, no doubt as a result of his exposure to Northern culture after his 1548 appointment as papal ambassador to the French. An inventory of objects belonging to the cardinal in Rome in 1549 lists twenty-three tapestries, and during the following years he made purchases from merchants in Antwerp, Siena, Venice, and Rome, including a *Story of Scipio* in 1551 from an Antwerp merchant.<sup>51</sup> At his death in 1572 the collection included more than one hundred eighty tapestries. About forty percent were verdure and foliage, but the collection also included seventeen sets of storiated tapestries, including *Scipio*, *Phaeton*, and *Romulus and Remus*.<sup>52</sup>

In Mantua the three sons of Francesco II Gonzaga and Isabella d'Este—Federico II, Ercole, and Ferrante—were significant tapestry patrons, as Brown and Delmarcel have demonstrated.<sup>53</sup> Federico II, fifth marquis and first duke of Mantua and captain general of the imperial forces in Italy from 1529, was among the Italian nobles with whom Holy Roman Emperor Charles V enjoyed especially close relations. Charles stayed with him in Mantua in March 1530 and November 1532, elevating him to the rank of duke in April 1531 and investing him with the duchy of Monferrato in 1536. Federico was celebrated for his patronage of Giulio Romano and for the construction of the Palazzo Te. His tapestry patronage is poorly documented, but descriptions demonstrate that tapestries were an important component of the figurative decorations at his court. When Charles V visited Mantua in 1530, the castle was described as covered with tapestries from top to bottom, including one very expensive gold-woven set valued at more than 18,000 ducats. An inventory taken in 1541 lists more than three hundred tapestries. Although few titles are given, circumstantial evidence suggests that at least some of these were Netherlandish tapestries woven from designs by Giulio Romano. Federico eventually followed the Este example and in 1539 established a tapestry manufactory in Mantua, where the first set of designs were also by Giulio.

Following Federico's death in 1540, his brother Ercole became regent during the minority of Francesco III and in the following years spent considerable sums to acquire tapestries for his residence in the Palazzo Vescovile. He took over patronage of the Mantua workshop in 1540 and authorized an agent in the Netherlands to spend more than 10,000 *libre* on tapestries of Old Testament subjects in 1541–42. Further acquisitions were made in 1549 (including a set made from cartoons prepared by Anselmo Guazzi, an artist who worked with Giulio Romano), while other purchases of Netherlandish tapestries were contemplated in 1557 and 1561.<sup>54</sup> Writing to his agent in 1557, Ercole told him to acquire

tapestries with subjects "appropriate to my status and profession, nothing with fables or lascivious material, but something from the scriptures or the Old Testament."<sup>55</sup> The 1563 inventory of Ercole's possessions lists one hundred forty figurative tapestries.<sup>56</sup> One of Ercole's most splendid possessions was a reweaving of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* commissioned as a gift for Mantua Cathedral but eventually bequeathed to the church of Santa Barbara (see cat. no. 24).<sup>57</sup>

Ercole's younger brother, Ferrante Gonzaga, who had a distinguished military career under Charles V and served as viceroy of Sicily and governor of Milan, was an equally avid patron of the Brussels workshops. Correspondence vividly describes how various sets were acquired: some were from existing design series; others, such as the *Fruits of War* (see fig. 121) and the *Puttini* (fig. 184), were from designs that were conceived for him by a follower of Giulio Romano.

Finally, mention must be made of the continuing patronage of the Medici. The inventories of the possessions of Alessandro de' Medici after his 1537 assassination record some seventy tapestries, mostly verdure, possibly like the example now in the Cleveland Museum. His successor, Cosimo I de' Medici, established two sizable tapestry workshops in Florence in the 1540s, but during the following years he obtained tapestries from the Netherlands, including a seven-piece set of the *Story of the Creation* (see fig. 122), which he purchased in June 1551 from the Antwerp merchant Jan van der Walle, and a set of the *Story of Gideon* before 1562 (taken to Spain by his son Francesco on his marriage to Joanna of Austria).<sup>58</sup>

This brief survey of Italian patrons provides an idea of the central place tapestry continued to occupy in the art patronage and expenditure of the leading courts of the day. Numerous acquisitions were also made by the lesser nobility and the clergy during the sixteenth century, ensuring that Italian collections of the period were as rich in Netherlandish tapestries as those of any other European country.

#### PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN THE NETHERLANDS, 1520–60

In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, high-quality Brussels production was dominated by the merchant-weaver Pieter Edingen van Aelst. In fact, 1520 was something of an annus mirabilis for van Aelst who was then about seventy. The tapestries he had sold to Henry VIII in January 1519 and May 1520 had been exhibited in the English temporary palace at Guînes, to the admiration of the English and French courts and assorted ambassadors and representatives from around Europe. The first seven from the ten-piece Raphael *Acts of the Apostles* had been exhibited in Rome



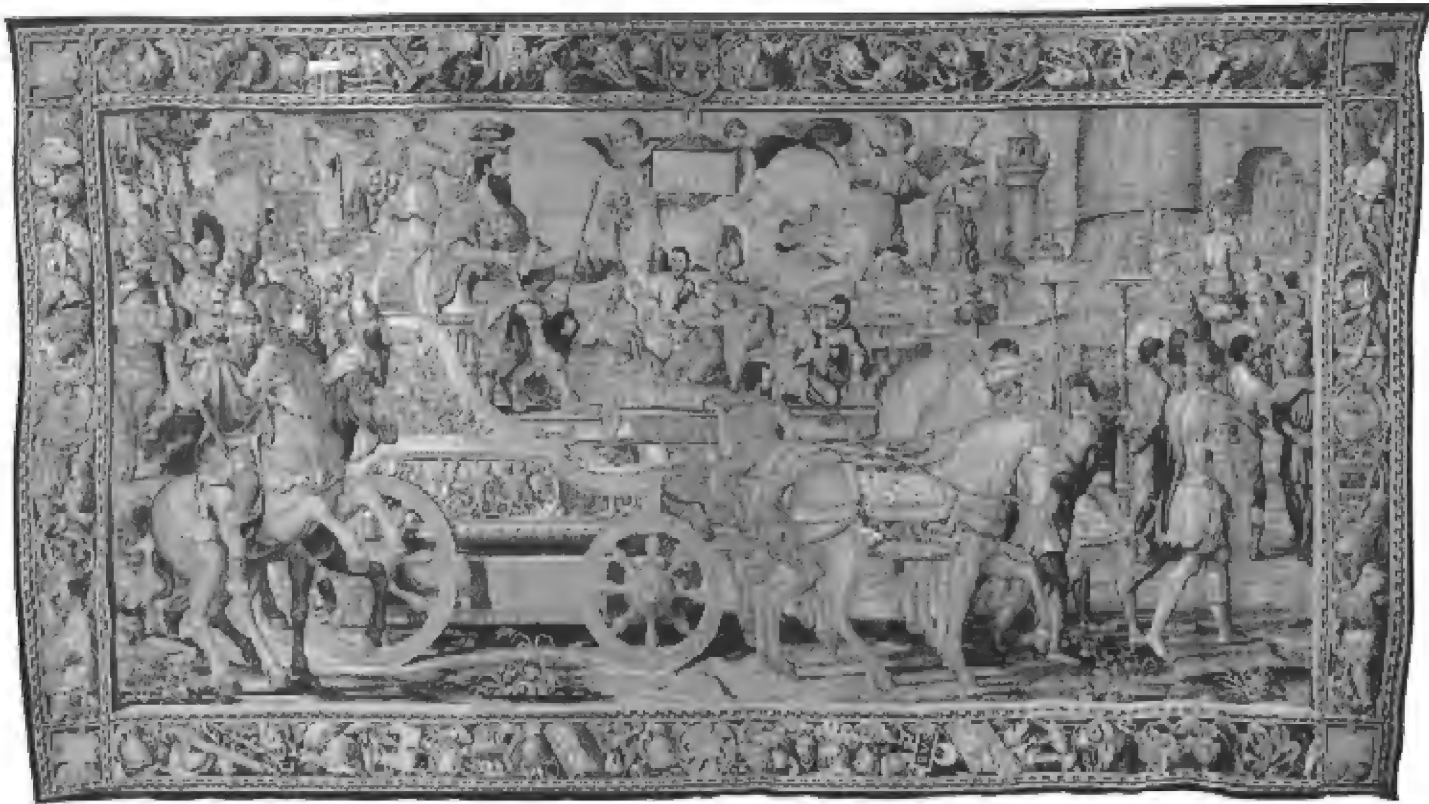


Fig. 121. *The Triumphal Cortege* from the *Fruits of War* (*Fructus belli*). Tapestry woven in the workshop of Jehan Baudouyn, Brussels, ca. 1545–47. Wool and silk, 495 x 890 cm. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels



Fig. 122. *The Creation of Eve* from the *Story of the Creation*. Tapestry design here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, woven in Brussels, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 484 x 635 cm. Galleria dell' Accademia, Florence

to universal praise; the Leonine set of *Triumphs of the Gods* was probably in production at this time; and work must have begun in that year (if not earlier) on the enormous allegorical *Honors* for Charles V. More was to come. In June 1521 Leo made a further order for one of the most expensive sets of the era, the twenty-piece *Giochi di putti*, which cost 17,600 ducats, and in 1524 van Aelst received a partial payment of 12,050 toward the total cost of 20,750 ducats for yet another papal commission, the *Life of Christ* set, eventually delivered to Rome in 1531. Besides completing these important commissions, van Aelst had high-quality tapestries woven as speculative ventures, such as the panels of the *Story of Saint John* and the *Story of David* that he mortgaged to the Munich firm of Sebastian Ligsalz and Balthasar Schrenk in 1525.<sup>59</sup> And on top of all this, he was probably trading in more mediocre products from other workshops. For example, in 1522 he supplied Charles V with forty-two tapestries prior to his voyage to Spain, including a seven-piece set of the *Story of the Trojan War*, fourteen pieces of the *Story of Noah*, sixteen *Hunts*, and six of the *Story of Indians with Elephants and Giraffes*. The last may have been from one of the Tournai workshops that owned cartoons of European explorers in the Indies.<sup>60</sup>

As this brief sketch indicates, van Aelst evidently continued to play the predominant role in the Brussels tapestry industry during the late 1510s and early 1520s: he supplied the richest European clients, with the connections to finance the most costly and ambitious tapestry projects of the age.<sup>61</sup> Although we know the names of a few other merchants and master weavers active at this period, such as Pieter de Pannemaker, tapissier to Margaret of Austria, and Gabriel van der Tommen, van Aelst appears to have operated in a league of his own, his reputation bringing him the major commissions of the day.

During the late 1520s, however, other merchants and merchant-weavers came to prominence, probably benefiting from the loosening grip that the aging van Aelst held over the high-quality market. Foremost among these was the Dermoyen family. A Christiaan Dermoyen was among a group of weavers and artists persecuted for attending sermons by the Lutheran Claes van der Elst in 1527.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, a Willem and Jan Dermoyen were involved in the production of the first sets of the *Battle of Pavia* (supplied to Charles V in 1531) and the *Hunts of Maximilian* (between 1530 and 1533) on both of which the firm mark appears (previously and erroneously attributed to the merchant Jan Ghieteels). They were subsequently instrumental in dispatching sample pieces of these designs to Süleyman the Magnificent in Constantinople in 1533, along with the painter Pieter Coecke van Aelst. In 1531 Willem Dermoyen supplied a dynastic set of the

*Genealogy of the House of Nassau* (see fig. 142) to Henry III of Nassau from designs by van Orley; in 1534 one of Willem's agents was paid by Francis I for three pieces of a set of the *Acts of the Apostles* (the cartoons were presumably acquired from the estate of Pieter van Aelst); and the following year he sold a twelve-piece *Story of Hercules* to Mary of Hungary. Both Willem and his brother Jan were prosecuted in 1539 along with other merchants for the inappropriate use of *retouchage* (completing details of their tapestries in paint or crayon, rather than having them woven as required by guild regulations). The stiff penalties imposed were later commuted to more lenient fines, and their relation with the Habsburg court seems to have been restored. Jan Dermoyen subsequently supplied a tapestry of the *Tree of Jesse* and a set of the *Story of Joshua* to Charles V in 1544 and 1545. During the 1560s Roderick Dermoyen, Willem's son, described as a citizen of Lübeck, played an important role in supplying tapestries to Sigismund II Augustus of Poland.<sup>63</sup>

Another major figure in the Brussels industry during the 1530s was the merchant-weaver Willem de Kempeneer (fl. 1534–44), who had a large workshop on the Heergracht. Like the Dermoyen, Kempeneer seems to have had a controlling interest in a number of major design series. The first was a *Story of Jacob*, from designs by van Orley (see fig. 144); its earliest documented weaving was that sold to the Antwerp dealer Joris Vezeleer in 1534, of which an edition was purchased by Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio and of which Kempeneer subsequently sold another weaving in 1540 to the Spanish merchant Diego Aranda, for a Spanish client. The second was the *Story of Abraham*, whose first weaving was supplied to Henry VIII in 1543–44 (see cat. no. 48); duplicate sets were later sold to many other leading patrons. Kempeneer appears to have owned the cartoons of both these designs. In 1539 he was among those charged with fraudulently enhancing his tapestries, but like those of the Dermoyen, his fines were later reduced. Willem's son Jan represented his father's business in Antwerp and was involved in organization of the new tapestry market there in 1553–54. Nonetheless, he continued to play an important part in the Brussels industry during the 1540s. His mark appears with those of other workshops on the *Story of the Creation* set purchased by Cosimo de' Medici in 1551, and he was among the consortium involved in the production of the Wawel tapestries.<sup>64</sup>

Another important business was that owned by the Ghieteels family. Jan Ghieteels was probably a dean of the tapestry guild in 1544 and acted as one of the inspectors for the *Tunis* set in 1554. None of his actual production has been identified, but a mark that appears to be composed of the letters FNG or FNVG (the reading is open to interpretation) is now thought to be that of his son Frans.



This mark often appears in conjunction with that of the merchant-weaver Jan van Tieghem, who married Jan Ghieteels's daughter Johanna. Both marks appear on the sets of tapestries supplied to Sigismund II Augustus during the early 1550s and on two *Acts of the Apostles* sets, one supplied to Ercole Gonzaga (see cat. no. 24) and the second to an unidentified member of the Habsburg family (Madrid), during the 1550s.<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps the most important of the workshops to emerge during the second quarter of the sixteenth century was that of the Pannemaker family. Pieter de Pannemaker was court tapissier to Margaret of Austria during the 1510s, supplying high-quality sets of the *Story of David* to Maximilian (possibly a weaving of the design series that survives today in Madrid) and of the "square" *Passion* from designs by van Orley to Margaret of Austria between 1518 and 1522 (figs. 131–34).<sup>66</sup> One of the master weavers prosecuted in 1527 for attending sermons of van der Elst, Pannemaker was stripped of his official title and ordered to surrender one-third of the value of his possessions, but this penalty was subsequently reduced to a much lower annual fine. His continued good standing with the Habsburg court is reflected by the fact that he supplied a duplicate of the *Alba Last Supper* (cat. no. 30) to Charles V in 1531. Pieter disappears from accounts after this, but his son Willem was to become one of the most powerful figures in the Brussels tapestry industry, wielding a power equal to or even greater than that of van Aelst in an earlier period. Indeed, he eventually purchased van Aelst's former property on the "stoute craenstraeten," in 1560.<sup>67</sup> In 1541 he repaired many of the old Burgundian sets, and his mark appears on a substantial portion of the most valuable sets acquired by the Habsburg court during the 1540s, 1550s, and 1560s, including the *Verdure with the Arms of Charles V* (fig. 111), the *Seven Deadly Sins* (see cat. no. 47), the *Apocalypse* (see cat. no. 51), the *Poesia* (see cat. no. 49), and the *Story of Noah*. Most important, he was responsible for the enormous undertaking of the *Conquest of Tunis*, woven between 1548 and 1554, in reward for which he received an annual pension. Willem was also active in supplying tapestries to many other European rulers and allies of the Habsburg court, including Ferrante Gonzaga (*Puttini*; see fig. 184), Cardinal Granvelle (*Gardens and Pergolas*; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; *Conquest of Tunis*, Town Hall, Mechelen); and the duke of Alba (*Conquest of Tunis*, destroyed; *Military Victories of the Duke of Alba*, Palacio de Liria, Madrid, see fig. 113).<sup>68</sup>

These merchants, and others like them, evidently held a controlling interest in sizable workshops, staffed by many highly skilled weavers. We have few specific figures, but the number and size of tapestries produced indicate that some of the large work-

shops must have employed between fifty and one hundred workers. For example, the staggered production of the *Tunis* set alone must have employed at least forty workers, and Pannemaker evidently took on other projects during this production period (for example, the *Puttini* tapestries made for Ferrante Gonzaga). On the basis of such calculations, it seems reasonable to suppose that during the 1540s and 1550s there must have been at least ten large workshops, each with five to ten large looms and perhaps as many smaller looms, and an equal number of smaller workshops. The volume of high-quality tapestries produced in this era suggests that they all must have been in semicontinuous operation, employing scores of weavers. As in previous eras and in other centers, these workshops and their owners interacted on a flexible basis, entering partnerships as necessary to win commissions and to complete them in a timely fashion. For example, the marks of at least four different well-established workshops appear on the many tapestries supplied to Sigismund II Augustus during the early 1550s.

Although these major workshops commanded a considerable percentage of the high-quality production, they were just part of a much larger industry, the dynamics of which are relatively unstudied. On the basis of subsequent evidence, it seems reasonable to assume that the Brussels industry must have employed several thousand individuals by the mid-1510s, a number that must have increased in the following decades. In 1545 Cosimo de' Medici's agent in Brussels reported that there were then fifteen thousand people working in the tapestry industry in Brussels. As the town is estimated to have had a population of about fifty thousand at this date, this indicates that almost one-third of its inhabitants were involved in the trade in one way or another.<sup>69</sup>

The vast majority of Brussels weavers must have been occupied in the production of low- and medium-quality tapestries, but the volume of orders flowing into Brussels supported large numbers of highly skilled weavers. The latter were adept not only at weaving decorative costumes, landscapes, and architectural features but also at achieving the much more challenging tonal modulations required for the naturalistic figures and faces that came into vogue during the 1520s with the Raphael-school designs. There is little hard evidence about the wages and status of such weavers, but later practice at the Mortlake, Paris, and Gobelins workshops indicates that they were paid considerably more than less-skilled journeymen and that there must have been competition for their services. When Charles V commissioned the *Tunis* set from Willem de Pannemaker in 1548, he ordered the tapissier to have it woven as quickly as possible and to employ seven weavers on each tapestry from dawn until dusk. In order to expedite production

of the set, Pannemaker hired skilled labor at such high wages that he violated regulations introduced in 1544 and caused consternation among other merchant-weavers. Subsequently various Brussels and Antwerp merchants tried to lure some of Pannemaker's master weavers from the *Tunis* project, leading Mary of Hungary to take steps to prevent such subornation.<sup>70</sup>

Weavers usually sat side by side at the loom, each working on a section approximately one meter wide. Calculations of production time, which are based on the speed with which documented sets were delivered, suggest that skilled weavers could produce about half a square meter per month of high-quality tapestry (lower-quality production was faster, as much as one square meter a month).<sup>71</sup> A tapestry 8 meters long and 5 meters high would thus have taken five weavers sixteen months to produce. If the tapestry was one of ten, then fifty weavers would be required for that length of time. In fact, it seems that sets were usually woven in groups of three or four pieces, as for instance, Francis I's *Scipio* tapestries, which were delivered over a period of four years, four or five pieces at a time.

#### ANTWERP AND TRADE

Brussels was the font of high-quality production, but the center of the tapestry trade from the late fifteenth century was Antwerp (fig. 123). At the turn of the century the Portuguese chose Antwerp to be the center of the European spice trade, and the city soon became the preeminent center of trade and banking in Europe. In the early sixteenth century most tapestry transactions took place during the two six-week fairs held in Antwerp every year, but by the mid-1520s the city was effectively a permanent trading market.<sup>72</sup> Tapestries were first sold in several different venues within Antwerp of which the Predikherenpand in the Dominican cloister was the most important. In 1551 the city began construction of a new trading hall on the Schuttershoven, where merchants and weavers could rent booths (fig. 124). Dedicated to the sale of tapestries, tapestry cartoons, and raw materials, this space opened in July 1554.<sup>73</sup> The amount of trade passing through Antwerp as early as the 1510s is suggested by the wholesale purchases made in the Netherlands by agents acting for Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey. As we have seen, one of Henry's agents traveled to the Netherlands in 1516 to purchase tapestries for Beaulieu and returned with one hundred and eight pieces. Four years later Richard Gresham rushed from London to get to the annual fair in time to place Wolsey's commission for twenty-two chambers of tapestry. While the documentation pertaining to these trips does not specify Antwerp as the destination, it is almost certain that this was the venue in which the English agents arranged these

acquisitions. The speed with which the Wolsey commissions were completed demonstrates that mechanisms were in place for the division of contracts among a range of Netherlandish workshops.

The volume of trade passing through Antwerp by the middle of the century is indicated by a report of 1551 by Mario Cavalli, a Venetian agent. According to Cavalli, while Brussels, Oudenaarde, and Enghien were the main centers of production, all of the product passed through Antwerp for export. Citing a total value of 2,400,000 ducats worth of goods exported through Antwerp per year, he estimated that tapestry accounted for 500,000 ducats, twenty-one percent of the total.<sup>74</sup> Modern research demonstrates that tapestry did account for an enormous component of the trade with Italy, Portugal, Spain, and France. For example, it has been estimated that tapestry accounted for approximately sixteen percent of all Netherlandish exports to France at this date.<sup>75</sup> While the vast majority of this trade concerned lower-quality products, most of the high-quality work originated in Brussels.

Given the large sums of capital involved in high-quality production, it was inevitable that Antwerp merchants would also become closely involved with the tapestry trade. The date and circumstances in which this interaction became fully established are unclear, but from the 1530s the names of various Antwerp merchants appear with great regularity in connection with some of the most expensive commissions of the day from the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English courts. Foremost among these was Joris Vezeleer, who started his career as a goldsmith and rose to become master general of the mint for Brabant in 1545. The wealth he accrued in this field evidently enabled him to speculate in other luxury goods, including jewelry and tapestry. His earliest documented tapestry transaction was the sale of tapestries of the *Story of Lot* and the *Emperor Constantine* to Francis I in 1528. The following year he sold him sets of *Jeroboam* and *Perseus*, and on January 20, 1533, Francis paid him for seven tapestries of the *Story of Saint Paul*, probably the first weaving of the Pieter Coecke design of this subject. During the same period he also received very large payments for goldwork that he supplied to the French king. His relationship with the French court extended over many years, and in October 1550 he was paid for supplying a set of the *Story of Psyche* to Henry II. At the same time he also supplied jewelry and tapestries to the Habsburg court, including a set of *Vertumnus and Pomona* (see fig. 182), sold to Mary of Hungary before 1548. This set was used as the standard for determining the amount of silver and gold thread in the *Tunis* set, specified in a contract drawn up with Pannemaker. Vezeleer seems to have been engaged with the tapestry industry on a number of levels. Some of his purchases were made directly from merchant-





Fig. 123. *View of Antwerp*, ca. 1518–40. Oil on panel, 108 x 183 cm. Nationaal Scheepvaartmuseum, Antwerp

weavers, such as the the large sets of the *Story of Iphigenia* and *Joseph* that he purchased in 1534 from the Brussels merchant Willem de Kempeneer (the *Iphigenia* was subsequently sold to Francis I). But he also commissioned cartoons in his own right, including that of the *Vertumnus and Pomona* series, as we know from a letter written to Cardinal Granvelle by his agent Maximilian Morillon in 1565. The close contacts between the elite merchants who controlled much of the high-quality tapestry production is indicated by the fact that Vezeleer's daughter Cecilia married Melchior Baldi, an agent of the Venetian merchant Marc Crétif, who supplied the *Scipio* series to Francis I between 1532 and 1536 and, to the same monarch, tapestries of *Romulus and Remus* and the *Creation of the World* in 1537.<sup>76</sup>

Pieter van der Walle, another Antwerp goldsmith with whom Vezeleer collaborated in a number of financial transactions, was also important in the tapestry trade from the late 1530s. His primary business appears to have been in jewels, but in 1533 he was one of the consortium involved in the project to send samples of the *Battle of Pavia* and *Hunts of Maximilian* sets to Constantinople.<sup>77</sup> In 1539 he was granted a license to export a range of luxury goods to

England, including tapestry, on condition that Henry VIII should have first choice of his wares. An inventory taken at Westminster Palace in 1540 records a rich tapestry bed supplied by van der Walle for Prince Edward, and according to the 1547 inventory of the English crown, he was also responsible for supplying a four-piece *Story of Romulus and Remus* to Henry VIII, probably an earlier weaving of the series that his son Jan van der Walle supplied to Philip of Spain in 1550.<sup>78</sup> Van der Walle evidently enjoyed a close relationship with the English court, brokering substantial deals regarding jewelry and other commodities. He acted as a middleman between Henry and the Fuggers on occasion, and in all likelihood he was responsible for other tapestry sales to Henry during the 1540s.<sup>79</sup> Nor were his activities confined to the English court. In 1544 he supplied a set of the *Seven Deadly Sins* to Mary of Hungary (see cat. no. 47), and in 1556 a set of the *Poesia* to Philip II (see cat. no. 49). Both sets carry the mark of Willem de Pannemaker's workshop. Jan van der Walle also sold the set of the *Story of the Creation* (see fig. 122) to Cosimo de' Medici in 1551.<sup>80</sup>

Another Antwerp merchant who played a significant part in the tapestry trade was Erasmus Schets. One of the richest



Fig. 124. The Tapestry Makers' Pand in Antwerp (built 1551–53; destroyed 1746). Woodcut by Virgilius Boloniensis, 1565. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp

merchants and bankers in Antwerp, he rose to prominence during the 1520s, lending huge sums to the Habsburg government and specializing in the trade of precious metals, a field in which he competed and on occasion associated with the Fuggers. He maintained an extensive correspondence with Erasmus and succeeded Pieter Gillis as the transfer agent for the humanist's English annuities. During the mid-1540s he played an important role in supplying nautical materials and munitions to the English court, along with other luxury goods that included an unspecified number of high-quality tapestries, among them a set of the *Story of Tobias* in or before 1546 (of which one piece survives at Hampton Court). Besides the tapestries he supplied to Henry VIII, he also sold Mary of Hungary sets of the *Story of Scipio* (1544; a composite of the design series purchased by Francis I in the early 1530s; see cat. nos. 41–43) and a *Story of Tobias* (1547; Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid). His standing is suggested by the

fact that in 1545 he entertained Charles V at the fine house he had built for himself in Antwerp.<sup>81</sup>

An interesting question that requires further research is the extent to which the Brussels merchant-weavers and the Antwerp merchants were responsible for developing some of the more important design series of the day as speculative ventures. A brief citation in correspondence of 1565 provides evidence that Vezeleer owned the cartoons and copyright of the *Vertumnus and Pomona* designs. What were the circumstances in which large series such as the *Story of Saint Paul* and the *Story of Joshua* were conceived? The subjects held rich resonances for many patrons for a variety of reasons, and they were susceptible to both Reformation and anti-Reformation interpretations. Yet the signal lack of specific iconographic details that might link these sets to one court or another suggests that the designs may have been developed as speculative ventures. Commanding access at the highest court levels because of their status as international financiers and brokers, the Antwerp merchants were very sensitive to the tastes and interests of their courtly clientele. Many of these merchants were also well connected and sympathetic to the humanists and reformist thinkers in England, France, and Germany, making their role even more complex.

#### ABUSE AND REGULATION

The enormous demand for Brussels tapestries from the 1510s encouraged the expansion of the industry, but it also led to abuses, as workshops sped up production by taking shortcuts. The most pernicious abuse was the use of paint or crayon to color areas of design that had not been woven as an integral part of the tapestry. A moderate amount of touching up, done by *afzetters*, had been accepted in the trade during the early sixteenth century, but the practice appears to have become increasingly widespread and fraudulent during the mid-1520s.<sup>82</sup> Equally damaging to the reputation of the Brussels workshops were attempts by unscrupulous merchants to pass off the products of other centers as Brussels products.

To combat these abuses, the Brussels tapestry guild introduced legislation in 1528 requiring that any tapestry over 6 ells (2.81 sq. m) in size have two marks woven into the selvage, indicating that it had been inspected by the guild officers. The first was the town mark composed of two B's (for Brabant and Brussels) separated by a red shield; the second, the mark of the weaver or merchant who had caused the tapestry to be made. (Lead or wax seals had been applied to completed tapestries since the fifteenth century, but these were easily removed by the unscrupulous.) These marks were to be entered in a register



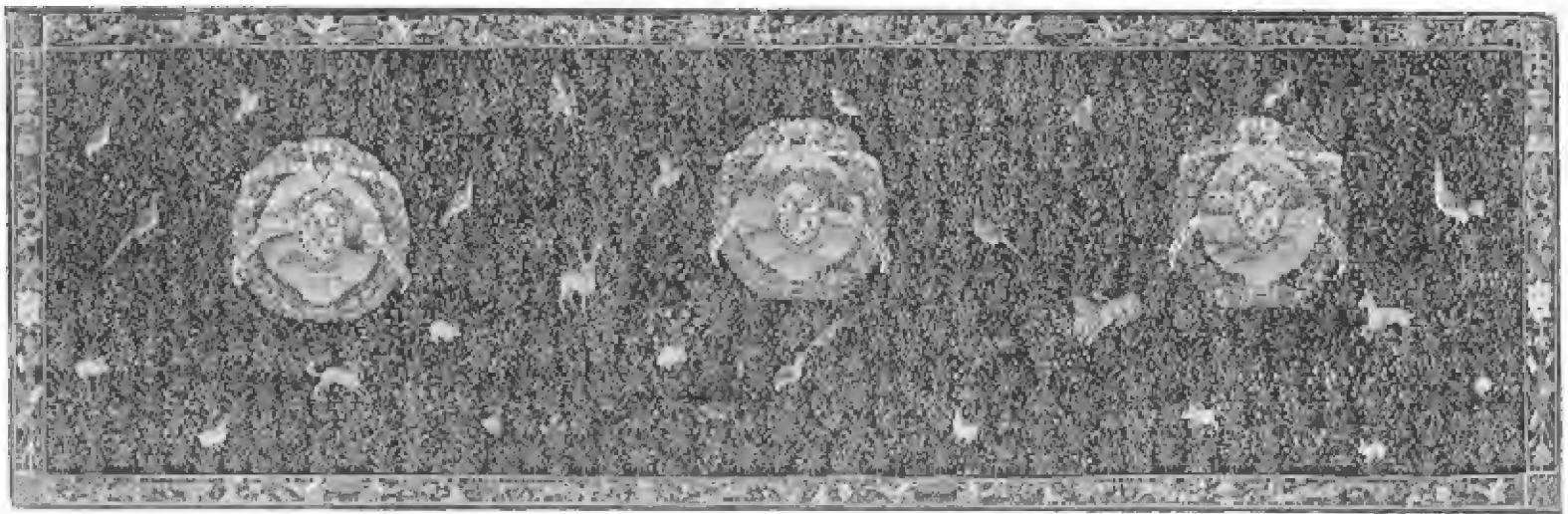


Fig. 125. *Millefleurs with the Arms of Paolo Giovio*. Tapestry woven in Bruges, ca. 1530. Wool and silk, 221 x 683 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

maintained by the guild (destroyed in 1690). Any weaver found to be producing faulty products was liable to a range of penalties. Despite these efforts at self-regulation, several leading Brussels merchants including the Dermoyen and Kempeneer were accused of retouching their tapestries in 1539. Henry VIII's tapestry agent, Jan Mosting of Edingen (Enghien), testified in vain that during his twelve years of service he had not encountered any of the faults of which they were accused. The merchants were found guilty. Large numbers of tapestries were seized in Antwerp, and the miscreants were subjected to severe penalties, which were subsequently commuted to much lighter fines.<sup>83</sup>

In May 1544 an imperial edict set out detailed regulations for tapestry production in the Netherlands. All aspects of the materials and the manufacturing process were regulated.<sup>84</sup> Thenceforth, the products of each different center were to carry town and weavers' marks akin to those applied to Brussels tapestries. Enghien, which had been applying town marks since the mid-1530s, continued to use the mark of an E and an N separated by a shield divided into white and black segments; Bruges adopted the symbol of a Gothic b next to a weaving shuttle; Tournai used a tower; Oudenaarde a pair of spectacles above a shield with a yellow field and three red bars; and Antwerp two hands on either side of a tower.<sup>85</sup> This edict was promulgated with some delay in different centers; in Oudenaarde in January 1545, in Brussels in October 1546, and in Bruges in 1547. Antwerp delayed until July 1562, probably to aid the town's fight against Brussels's dominance of the industry.

The extent to which Antwerp had any significant weaving industry of its own during the 1530s and 1540s is difficult to assess. No certain products have been identified, and it may be significant

that although the Antwerp authorities enticed Pieter Coecke van Aelst to establish a cartoon workshop in Antwerp in 1543, all the designs that are probably to be attributed to this workshop during the following decade were produced by Brussels workshops. However, from the early 1550s the Antwerp authorities sought to develop local production, offering favorable terms to cartoonists and weavers from other centers to relocate. The success of these efforts is reflected by the relocation in 1553 of the merchant-weaver Pieter van Uden and a workforce of four hundred weavers, including thirty-three master weavers. All were rewarded with the freedom of the city. An act of July 20, 1559, extended this privilege to any Brussels weavers who wished to relocate, and subsequently other merchant-weavers such as Michel de Bos followed van Uden's example.<sup>86</sup>

Other Netherlandish centers accounted for the bulk of low- and medium-quality production. The extent to which Tournai continued to be an important center of production for medium-quality products during the 1530s and 1540s is unclear. Few signed products have survived.<sup>87</sup> In contrast, Bruges, Enghien, and Oudenaarde evidently flourished. The Bruges workshops enjoyed particular success in producing customized armorial millefleurs, of which examples with the arms of Cardinal Mattheus Lang of Wellenburg, archbishop of Salzburg, and Paolo Giovio, bishop of Nocera, survive (fig. 125).<sup>88</sup> Similarly, a large part of Enghien production from the late 1530s seems to have been large-leaf verdure populated with birds and animals, which surpassed millefleurs in popularity from the mid-1530s.<sup>89</sup> Similar designs were also produced in Oudenaarde, along with a large volume of lower-quality figurative tapestries. Following the seizure of large numbers of Oudenaarde tapestries in 1539 in

the wake of investigation of fraudulent use of *retouchage*, the town bailiff, Philip de Lalaing, wrote to Mary of Hungary asking for a repeal of these seizures because twelve thousand people were dependent on the local tapestry industry and the poverty imposed by the ban would lead to riot.<sup>90</sup> Assuming that a significant portion of this number were family members and dependents, the figure nonetheless suggests that there were

several thousand weavers active in the Oudenaarde region. Statistics like these reflect the extent to which the tapestry industry was inextricably linked with the economy of the Netherlands at this date. This was the context in which the leading Brussels workshops and Antwerp merchants realized, between 1520 and 1560, many of the greatest tapestry projects that have ever been undertaken.

1. Russell 1969. For discussion of the tapestries, see T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 127–30.
2. Hall 1904, vol. 1, pp. 191–92.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 214–15.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
7. T. Campbell 1996b, pp. 129–30; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 99–101, 129–30.
8. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 90–97.
9. Giustiniani 1854, vol. 2, p. 314.
10. T. Campbell 1996a.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 103; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 151–52.
12. T. Campbell 1996b; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 200–51.
13. T. Campbell 1998a, esp. pp. 251–74.
14. Starkey 1998, *passim*.
15. Horn 1989, p. 153, n. 57.
16. Delmarcel in Munich, Mechelen, and Amsterdam 1993, pp. 64–91.
17. Mechelen 2000, p. 10.
18. Beecr 1891, pp. CLVIII–CLXIV, no. 8436; van den Boogert in Utrecht and 's Hertogenbosch 1993, pp. 291–301, 314–19.
19. Delmarcel 1999b, p. 156.
20. Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, pp. 54–67; Jordan 2000, pp. 281, 286–93.
21. Delmarcel 1999b.
22. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986.
23. Buchanan 1999.
24. Bertini in Colorno 1998, pp. 42–44; Bertini 1999, pp. 127–30; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 103–5; Forti Grazzini 1999b, pp. 152–59.
25. Pérez Pastor 1914, p. 359.
26. Steppe and Delmarcel 1974.
27. Baldass 1920, nos. 140–45.
28. Piquard 1950.
29. Horn 1989, pp. 130, 136; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 136.
30. Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a; Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 363–38.
31. Erlande-Brandenburg 1974.
32. Cox-Rearick 1995, p. 28.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 366–67.
34. Lefébure 1993; Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 377–83.
35. Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, p. 271; T. Campbell 1996c, pp. 443–45.
36. Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 366–67.
37. Guiffrey 1885–86, vol. 1, p. 294; Van den Kerkhove 1974, pp. 329, 334, n. 71; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 2, p. 531.
38. Yates 1959; Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, p. 84; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 139.
39. Weigert 1962, pp. 67–88.
40. Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 89–90.
41. Zerner 1996, p. 250.
42. M. Sartor 1912; Erlande-Brandenburg 1983.
43. Emmrich 1963; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 74.
44. Göbel 1923, pp. 101, 145; Stemper 1956; Mechelen 2000, pp. 39–40, 42; Hans Hubach is writing a study of Ottheinrich's tapestries.
45. Brassat 1992, pp. 207–8.
46. Heinz 1963, pp. 277–307; Bauer 2002.
47. Szablowski 1972a; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998.
48. Forti-Grazzini 1999b, pp. 144–46.
49. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 7, p. 15.
50. Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, pp. 108–10, no. 6; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, pp. 285–89, nos. 113–15; Forti Grazzini 1999b, pp. 146–50; Forti Grazzini 2002.
51. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 80.
52. Baratte 1976; Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 80, 93, n. 135.
53. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, *passim*.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 90–95, 99, 101–2.
55. “[C]onveniente al grado et profession mia, cioè che non contenessero favola o cosa lasciva, ma qualche historia della scrittura et del Testamento Vecchio”; *ibid.*, pp. 106–7.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 115–17, doc. 49.
57. Delmarcel in *ibid.*, pp. 148–57.
58. Adelson 1990, p. 82; Meoni 1998, p. 72.
59. Strieder 1938, p. 192.
60. Mechelen 2000, p. 15.
61. Schneebalg-Perelman 1969; Delmarcel 1990; Mechelen 2000, pp. 13–15.
62. Decavelc 1979–83.
63. Steppe in Halbtorn 1981, pp. 33–36; van den Boogert in Utrecht and 's Hertogenbosch 1993, pp. 295, 358, n. 72; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1996; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 364.
64. Crick-Kuntziger 1954; Calberg and Pauwels 1961; Schneebalg-Perelman 1972, pp. 418–23; Meoni 1989; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 366.
65. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 365, 369 (with bibliog.).
66. Paredes in Brussels 2000, pp. 30–41, 78–81.
67. Schneebalg-Perelman 1969, p. 282.
68. Horn 1989; Buchanan 1999; Delmarcel 1999a, *passim*, esp. p. 368 (with bibliog.).
69. Adelson 1985c, p. 15.
70. Horn 1989, pp. 26, 383.
71. Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 43–44; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 163.
72. Ewing 1990, p. 559.
73. Ewing 1990; Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, p. 99; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 117.
74. Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 96–97.
75. Ewing 1990, p. 581.
76. Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a; Van den Kerkhove 1974; Buchanan 1992; Buchanan 1999, p. 132.



77. Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 38–43.
78. T. Campbell 1998c, p. 50, n. 21; Buchanan 1999, p. 133.
79. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 94, 102–3; Buchanan 1999, p. 132.
80. Meoni 1989.
81. Buchanan 1992; van den Boogert in Utrecht and 's Hertogenbosch 1993, p. 295; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 103–4.
82. Schneeberg-Perelman 1961, pp. 191–93.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–97.
84. Van Ysselsteyn 1936, vol. 2, pp. 1–21.
85. Van Tichelen and Delmarcel 1990; Van Tichelen and Delmarcel 1993; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 115–16, 362.
86. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 176–80.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 164–66.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 180–87.
89. Mons 1980; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 168–76.
90. Schneeberg-Perelman 1961, p. 196; Oudenaarde 1999, p. 36.







# Bernaert van Orley and the Revolution in Netherlandish Tapestry Design, 1515-41

One of the most gifted painters working in the Low Countries in the first half of the sixteenth century and certainly the most important artist in Brussels during the 1520s and 1530s, Bernaert van Orley (1488–1541) was the first Northern tapestry designer whose work embodied an informed response to the aesthetics of the Italian Renaissance. Under the influence of the Raphael-school cartoons executed in Brussels between 1516 and 1530, van Orley forged a new tapestry style that combined the multiple narratives and anecdotal and decorative detail of the Netherlandish tradition with the distinctive characteristics of his Italian models. Especially significant among the latter were the relationship of Raphael's lifesize figures to clearly defined perspectival settings and the use of the borders of the tapestry as a frame through which a realistically portrayed moment of heightened physical or emotional drama is viewed. This synthesis provided a richly textured and dramatic style of design ideally suited to the tapestry medium. As such, it was to form the basis of the narrative and structural technique that dominated high-quality Netherlandish tapestry design for the next fifty years.<sup>1</sup>

Bernaert was the son of the Brussels painter Valentin van Orley (ca. 1466–1532), and both he and his brother, Everard (fl. 1517), trained in their father's workshop. Little is known of Valentin's work, but the wings of the Saluces Altarpiece, signed ORLEY (Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles), provide an idea of his style about 1510. Bernaert's precocious talent is attested by an altarpiece on the subject of the apostles Thomas and Matthew commissioned in the early 1510s by the Guild of the Carpenters and Masons for a chapel in Notre-Dame du Sablon (central panel, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; wings, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels), which demonstrates a predilection for Italian Renaissance motifs albeit applied in an additive and decorative fashion.<sup>2</sup> The altarpiece is prominently signed with van Orley's name and coat of arms, perhaps indicating that it was the master-work created for his entry into the painters' guild of Brussels. Van Orley's reputation was evidently well established by the mid-1510s, and from 1515 he began to supply portraits of the royal family to Margaret of Austria, the regent of the Netherlands. In 1516

he produced seven paintings for her nephew Charles (then king of Spain), and in 1517 he became a master in the Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke; this was an expedient move, as Antwerp was at that time becoming the preeminent center of the art market in the Netherlands and it was necessary to be a member of this guild to practice and sell there. In 1518 he was appointed Margaret's official court painter.<sup>3</sup>

As Farmer has demonstrated, by the early 1520s van Orley was directing a sizable workshop staffed by a number of apprentices, journeymen, and, on occasion, subcontractors, who were engaged in the assembly-line production of paintings, mostly portraits and altarpieces, from models by the master.<sup>4</sup> The quality of the surviving works shows that van Orley did not necessarily intervene in their execution. Farmer suggests, for example, that none of the half-dozen or so extant bust-length portraits of Margaret of Austria painted after a model by van Orley bear evidence of the master's hand.<sup>5</sup> Although the workshop continued to turn out a considerable number of copies during the 1520s, van Orley's participation in panel painting seems to have diminished as the decade progressed. This was almost certainly so because he was increasingly committing his time to tapestry design. Indeed, in his biography of van Orley, Karel van Mander celebrated the artist primarily as a tapestry designer, describing him as "in this medium [tapestry] especially talented and surehanded, and very well paid for his services."<sup>6</sup> The extent to which the master's shift of emphasis reflected the developing demand for tapestries in the Netherlands, the character of the commissions he received, or a change of priority motivated by personal choice is difficult to determine. Although the reasons underlying van Orley's new direction may be in doubt, there can be no question that in the course of the years 1520 to 1530 he was responsible for a succession of designs for weavings that fundamentally altered the style of Netherlandish tapestries. Van Orley's patrons must have shared with him an awareness of the innovative nature and significance of this work, given the degree of its departure from established norms and the fact that his clients were willing to support the high costs of these projects.

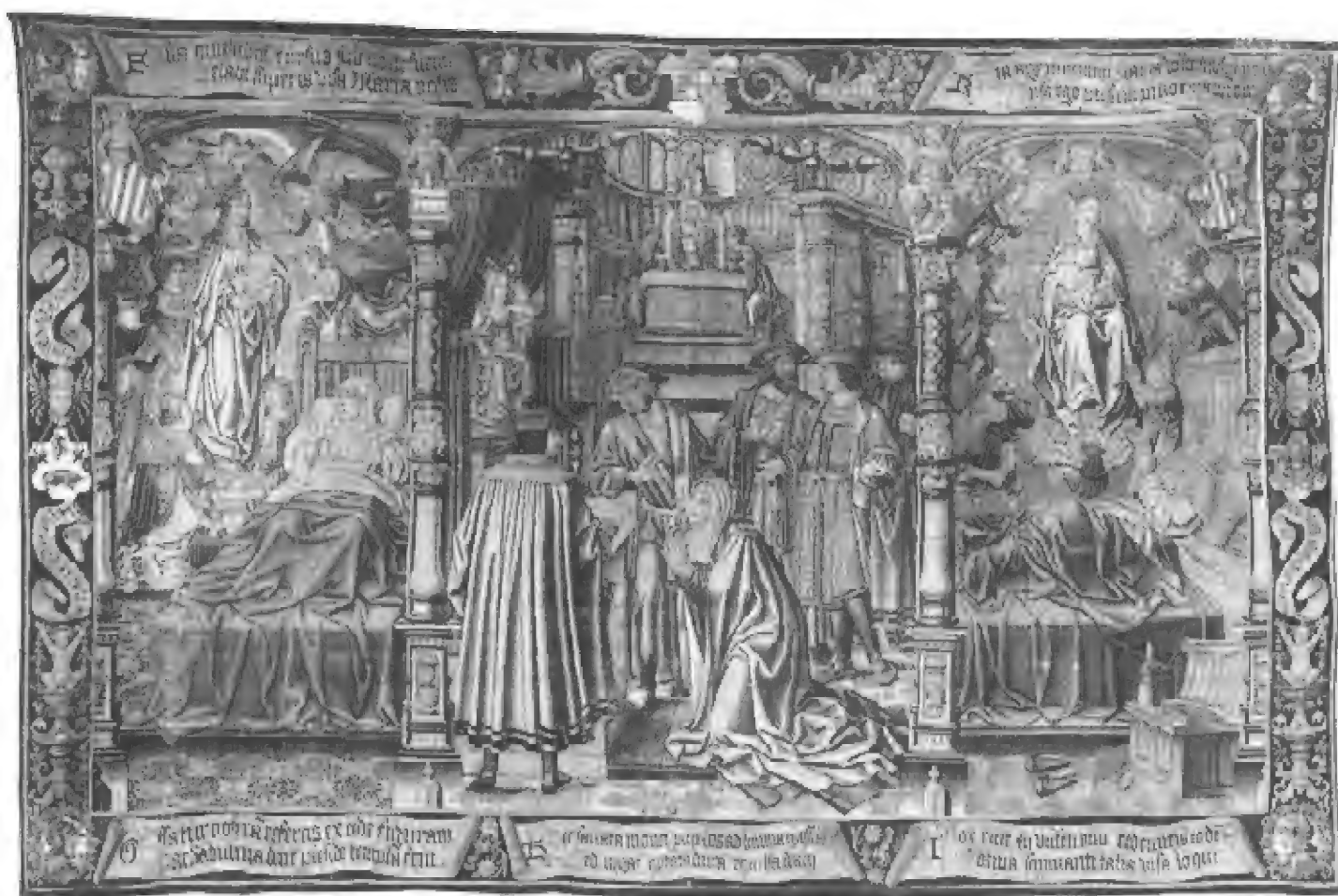


Fig. 127. *The Virgin Appears to Beatrice Soetkens* from the *Legend of Notre Dame du Sablon*. Tapestry design attributed to Bernaert van Orley, probably woven in Brussels, ca. 1518. Wool and silk, 345 x 513 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Only two of van Orley's tapestry designs are recorded in contemporary documentation, but a significant corpus of work in the medium can be attributed to him on the basis of autograph preparatory sketches and stylistic analogy. The earliest design that can be ascribed to him—on stylistic grounds in this case—is that of the four-piece set of the *Legend of Notre Dame du Sablon* (Our Lady of the Sands), probably ordered by Franz von Taxis about 1516 for the funerary chapel he had commissioned at Notre-Dame du Sablon (see cat. no. 16 and fig. 127). This group depicts the miraculous arrival of a famous statue of the Madonna and child at the church and incorporates portraits of members of the Habsburg court, including one of Margaret of Austria that is drawn directly from a model by van Orley. The designs retain many features derived from Northern tradition—namely, the crowded picture fields, sumptuous costumes, multiple narratives, and division of scenes by architectural elements. At the same time, the compositions demonstrate a new awareness of spatial perspective and an effort to represent the figures in realistically conceived settings. The *Legend of Notre Dame du Sablon* was probably designed in late 1516 or early 1517 and woven before the end of 1518, and it has often been assumed that the inspiration for the innovative character of

the set may have been the arrival in Brussels in 1516 of the first of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons. However, in view of the cautious way the perspectively correct interiors are combined with more traditional architectural framing devices (masked by a veneer of Renaissance ornament), this is by no means certain, and it is entirely possible that the scheme was developed before van Orley had an opportunity to study the cartoons.

The *Notre Dame du Sablon* set was made for an individual patrician, but many of van Orley's commissions during the following ten years stemmed directly from the Habsburg court. One of the most important projects on which he must have been engaged in the late 1510s was the preparation of designs and cartoons for some of the enormous panels of the nine-piece *Honors* set, an allegorical celebration of the virtues embodied by the Habsburg emperor (see cat. no. 17 and figs. 128–30). No documents relating to the commission of the *Honors* have survived, and as a result their date is a matter for discussion. Because the first panel in the sequence carries the date 1520 it has been suggested that the set was probably ordered by Margaret of Austria or Charles V to mark Charles's coronation as King of the Romans and Holy Roman Emperor-elect in October of that year. However, seven of these



tapestries had already been woven by the workshop of Pieter van Aelst by late spring 1523, and in view of the scale and quality of the tapestries it is questionable whether the weaving could have been finished by this date if the commission originated as late as autumn 1520. Here it is worth noting that in 1548 Jan Vermeyen was allowed two years to prepare cartoons—in this case cartoons based on preexisting designs—for the *Conquest of Tunis*, a series comparable in size with the *Honors*. In addition, tapestries of this scale would each have taken at least eighteen months to weave, and it would have been necessary for van Aelst to devote seven teams of craftsmen to work concurrently on this single project—itsself unusual, especially as the financing of the set was not secured. A commission date of 1520 and the proposal that the panels were occasioned by Charles's coronation are also cast in doubt by another fact: this elaborate celebration of the Habsburg dynasty does not include any portraits of Charles himself, whereas it features likenesses of Emperor Maximilian I and Margaret of Austria. Thus, an alternative proposal seems worthy of further consideration, the possibility that the design of the set was commissioned and conceived during the years 1517 to 1519, and that the cartoons were developed in 1519–20 by a number of artists, among them

van Orley, who made few changes to the original conception (see cat. no. 17).

Whatever the exact date of the *Honors* designs, van Orley appears to have played a key role in the late stages of the execution of part, but not all, of this monumental commission. His hand is particularly evident in the designs of *Fortuna* and *Infamia* (figs. 128, 130) and to a lesser extent in those of *Fama* and *Nobilitas* (cat. no. 17). In these four panels the figures have a vigor of movement and a degree of characterization that show parallels with van Orley's documented paintings of the late 1510s and early 1520s. These qualities are lacking in other panels of the series, for example in *Prudentia* (fig. 129), where the figures are calmer and more formulaic.<sup>7</sup> While the precise extent of van Orley's participation in this project requires further analysis, the heterogeneous nature of the *Honors* makes it reasonable to assume that he was not responsible for the entire set, as some authors have maintained, but rather that he collaborated on it with other leading designers and cartoonists of the day.

While the *Honors* designs show van Orley collaborating with other artists and proceeding within a fairly traditional compositional formula, another Habsburg commission, in progress between 1518

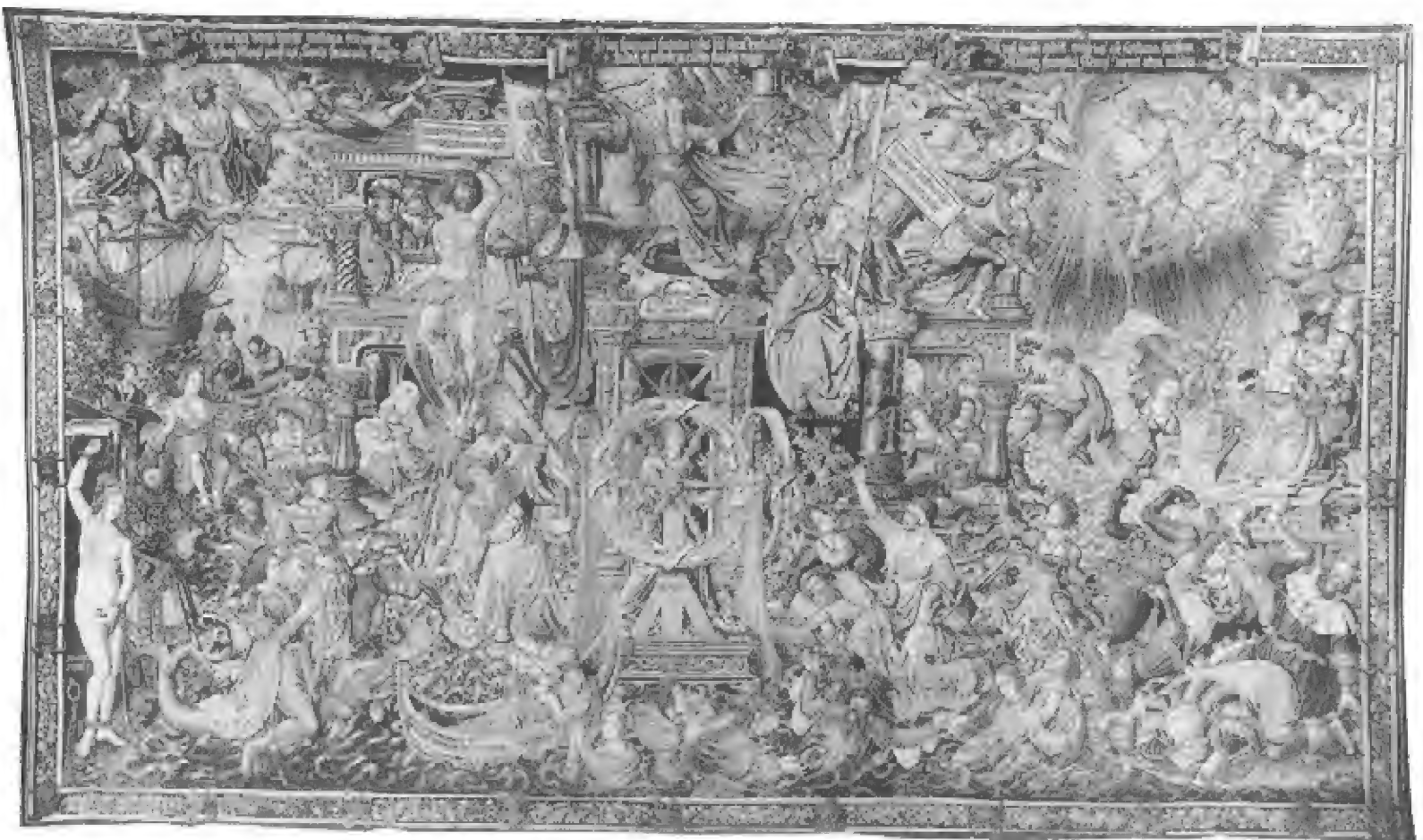


Fig. 128. *Fortuna* from the *Honors*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley and others, woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1520–25. Wool, silk, and gilt metal-wrapped thread, 496 x 860 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

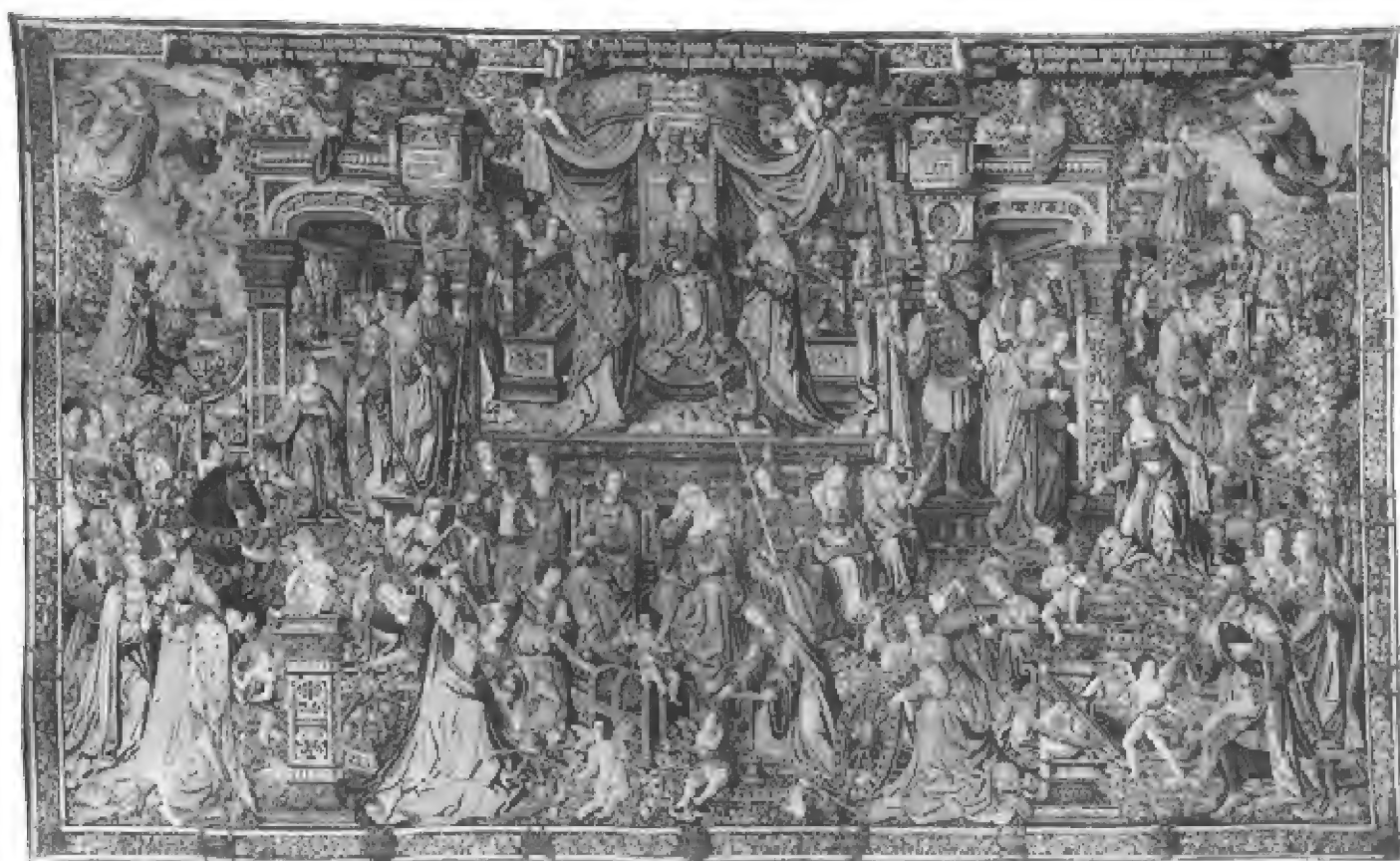


Fig. 129. *Prudentia* from the *Honors*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley and others, woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1520. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 500 x 813 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

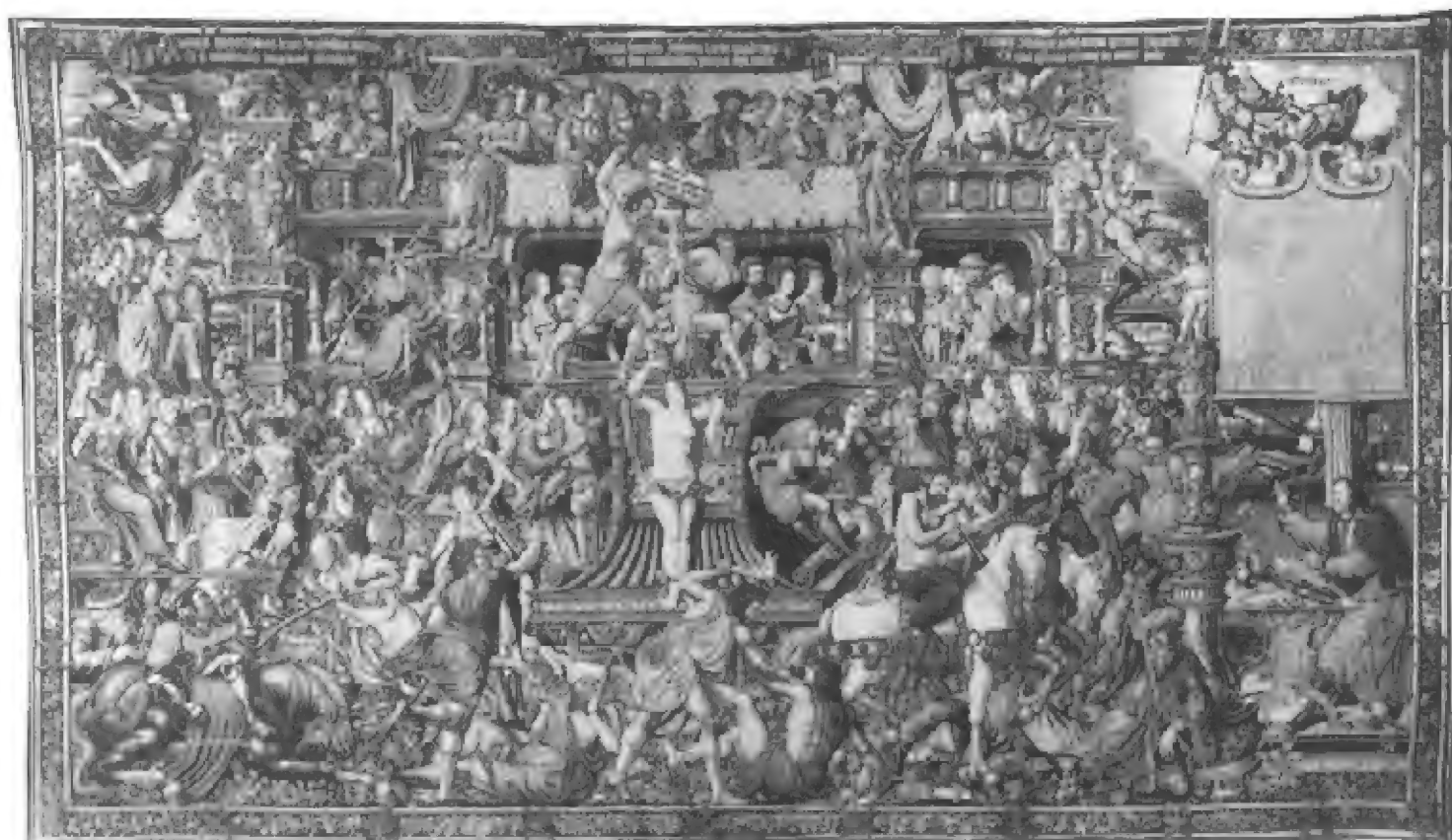


Fig. 130. *Infamia* from the *Honors*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley and others, woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst, Brussels, ca. 1520–25. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 496 x 860 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



and 1522, provides a fascinating demonstration of the subsequent development of his approach to tapestry design. According to a contract drawn up on September 1, 1520, with van Orley as a witness, Margaret of Austria's tapestry weaver, Pieter de Pannemaker, was to make two panels of *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and *Christ Carrying the Cross*, to match two that he had already completed of the *Crucifixion* and the *Deposition*.<sup>8</sup> This four-piece set, known as the "square" *Passion* (figs. 131–34), together with the components for a related throne canopy, survives in the Spanish royal collection. Although van Orley is not specified as the artist responsible for the two new designs, they so clearly provide a transition between his earlier and later work that his authorship is unanimously accepted. In contrast, the first two panels—whose design can be dated to early 1518 by analogy with the production period of the third and fourth pieces—are more traditional in iconography and style, to the extent that Delmarcel has suggested that van Orley may have executed their cartoons in conjunction with another artist, such as Colyn de Coter.<sup>9</sup> Several of the figures in the earlier tapestries are clearly based on prototypes in the 1507 *Passion* sequence now in the Spanish royal collection. For example, the turbaned man with his hands folded across his chest in the right foreground of Margaret's *Crucifixion* (fig. 131) is copied directly from a figure in the tapestry of the *Deposition* (fig. 55) in the 1507 set,

while the body of Veronica next to him is also drawn from a prototype in the earlier tapestry. The *Descent from the Cross* of Margaret's set (fig. 132) demonstrates a similar use of traditional elements, although here the foreshortening of the man bending over the top of the cross, the stance of the weeping woman leaning forward behind Saint John, and the twisted posture of the kneeling Mary in the left foreground evidence a new preoccupation with the relationship of figures to the space surrounding them.

The two later panels, which must have been designed and woven between 1520 and 1522, develop these tendencies further and also show a new, equally important feature, the influence of the work of Albrecht Dürer. In 1520 Dürer traveled to the Low Countries, where he was entertained at a dinner party hosted by van Orley in Brussels between August 26 and September 2 (the very week Pannemaker received the contract for the *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and the *Christ Carrying the Cross*).<sup>10</sup> The artistic exchange that must have taken place at this event is reflected by the marked influence of Dürer's work on the figures, landscapes, moods, and compositions of these two *Passion* scenes, which van Orley designed for Margaret in the following months. That the *Christ in the Garden* commission may have been the subject of discussion by van Orley and Dürer is suggested by a drawing of the subject that is signed with the German master's monogram and



Fig. 131. *The Crucifixion* from the "square" *Passion*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1518–20. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 345 x 345 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Fig. 132. *Descent from the Cross* from the "square" *Passion*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1518–20. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 345 x 345 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Fig. 133. *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* from the "square" *Passion*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1520–22. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 345 x 345 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Fig. 134. *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the "square" *Passion*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1520–22. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 345 x 345 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

dated 1520 (fig. 146), in which the head of the sleeping Peter and the landscape are remarkably close to these elements in van Orley's design.<sup>11</sup> While Dürer's influence is also evident in the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (fig. 134)—particularly in the character of the distant landscape, with its craggy Mount Calvary—van Orley was also working with an awareness of the composition and figures in Raphael's painting the *Spasimo di Sicilia*, which had been woven as a tapestry (cat. no. 25) in Brussels for Cardinal Bibbiena between 1516 and 1520. If these compositional debts are readily apparent, another equally important development from the earlier scenes was the greater emotional drama of the later panels, conveyed by the contrast between the resigned suffering of Christ and the intensely visualized details of the settings and of the costumes and physiognomies of the supporting characters.

At the time the *Passion* tapestries were conceived, the influence of Dürer on van Orley's work is much more marked than that of the Raphael school. The extent of van Orley's exposure to the *Acts of the Apostles* designs during the late 1510s is uncertain. According to a seventeenth-century tradition reported by Félibien, van Orley himself was responsible for overseeing the execution of the *Apostles* tapestries, but this is probably to be discounted.<sup>12</sup> With the exception of a running figure in the foreground of the *Infamia* panel of the *Honors*, which is evidently inspired by the soldier in the foreground of the *Conversion of Saul* (cat. no. 23) from the *Acts*

of the *Apostles*, the *Honors* set is remarkable for its lack of awareness of the Raphael designs. Indeed, the inspiration of Raphael's *Apostles* designs was not manifest in van Orley's art until the early 1520s. The next explicit dated evidence of van Orley's consideration of Raphael's work is provided by the *Virtue of Patience* triptych painted for Margaret of Austria in 1521 (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels). Representing the trials of Job on the inner panels and the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man on the outer wings, this altarpiece demonstrates van Orley's developing response to the *Apostles* cartoons. This is evident in van Orley's literal borrowing of the pose of the rich man in hell from the figure of Ananias in Raphael's *Death of Ananias* from the *Apostles* set, in the Netherlander's use of exaggerated poses and facial expressions to convey emotional drama, and in his increasingly realistic representation of the relationship between the figures and the space in which they are set.<sup>13</sup>

Raphael's influence became more profound in van Orley's tapestry designs of the following few years, as is revealed by two ensembles whose order of production is uncertain. One is a pair of *Passion* scenes, a *Last Supper* and a *Crucifixion*, designed sometime between 1522 and 1526 for an undocumented patron to complement rewavings of the *Christ in the Garden* and the *Christ Carrying the Cross* originally designed for Margaret of Austria between 1520 and 1522. Known collectively as the *Alba Passion*, the four pieces



are reunited for the first time in more than a century in this exhibition (cat. nos. 30–33). The two new scenes demonstrate the further maturation of van Orley's compositional formula, combining Dürer's emotional intensity and detailed landscapes with the figural proportions and spatial awareness of the Raphael-school designs. Quite apart from a new level of muscularity and volume that the figures occupy in the pictorial space, these scenes also represent a development in van Orley's visualization of his subject matter. The extreme emotion conveyed through the postures and expressions of the protagonists is complemented by the extraordinarily detailed way in which van Orley renders the scenes: for example, the knife hanging over the edge of the table in the *Last*

*Supper* (cat. no. 30); the complex way in which the unrepentant thief is tied to the cross (fig. 135); and the precisely observed implements in the executioner's toolbox in the *Crucifixion* (cat. no. 33). The intensity of this vision, and the quality of the designs, suggests that van Orley himself was closely involved in the drawing of the full-scale cartoons for these two new scenes, as was the case for the earlier *Christ in the Garden* and *Christ Carrying the Cross*.

The precedent for the vivid realization of the specific physical details in the *Last Supper* and the *Crucifixion* must have been the concept of history painting shaped by Raphael during the mid-1510s, albeit filtered through a Northern sensibility informed by the exquisite delineation of detail in Dürer's prints. Aside from the



Fig. 135. Detail of cat. no. 33: *Crucifixion* from the *Alba Passion*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, probably woven in the workshop of Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1525–28





Fig. 136. *The Lamentation*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in Brussels, ca. 1520–25. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 218 x 214 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 137. *Lamentation with Donor Portraits (Haneton Triptych)*. Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1522. Oil on panel, center 87 x 108.5 cm, wings each 87 x 48 cm. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels



impression that the *Acts* cartoons may have exerted on van Orley, another route by which he was probably exposed to the influence of Raphael's work must have been his acquaintance with Tommaso Vincidor, who was in Brussels from June 1520. Given the high status the two artists enjoyed, and the fact that both were working on important tapestry commissions, it seems reasonable to suppose that they discussed their work. We can also assume that in the course of their talks van Orley learned about the character of the production of Raphael's workshop, and the notions of history painting developed by the Roman master during the mid-1510s.<sup>14</sup> Van Orley not only absorbed ideas from Vincidor but also copied motifs from his work, for example, recasting several figures from the Italian's *Giochi di putti* set for an elaborate frame used for a *Lamentation* (fig. 136). This border and the *Lamentation* scene are disparate in nature, and whether the frame was actually created for the tapestry is uncertain. The main subject of the weaving appears in various paintings carried out by van Orley's workshop, of which the best example is the so-called *Haneton Triptych* (fig. 137). Although it has been argued that the tapestry is the original version of the composition, it may be that it was copied from one of the

workshop paintings and that the border, taken from a separate source and conceived for a different purpose, was arbitrarily juxtapositioned with it.<sup>15</sup>

The influence of the compositional formula of the *Acts of the Apostles* on van Orley's work during the early to mid-1520s is equally marked in the preparatory drawings for a series of the *Foundation of Rome*. Four drawings survive, all dated 1524 and signed with van Orley's monogram (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich; figs. 138, 139).<sup>16</sup> Letters on the reverse of the sheets indicate that they were part of a larger group of designs. The drawings are executed in pen and wash, in a vigorous, fluid style that neglects niceties of proportion and anatomy in favor of an emphasis on movement, extreme expressions, and strong facial characterizations. In each, large figures are engaged in dramatic activity or gesture grandiloquently in the foreground of a clearly defined architectural or exterior space. Not only the figures but also their relationship to the settings is clearly inspired by the *Acts of the Apostles*. Here the ornate tracery of the frames and buildings of the *Notre Dame du Sablon* and *Honors* sets is replaced by the representation of a Raphaelesque classical type of architecture, with



Fig. 138. *The Sabine Hersilia Imploring Romulus for Mercy*. Bernaert van Orley, 1524. Pen and wash on paper, 34.2 x 55.2 cm. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich



Fig. 139. *Romulus Giving the Law to the Roman People*. Bernaert van Orley, 1524. Pen and wash on paper, 34.5 x 54.5 cm. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich

monumental columns and antique decorative details. However, if he was drawing inspiration for the compositional formula and figures from Raphael, van Orley's use of his model was selective. He did not imitate the classical and simplified dress of Raphael's figures, retaining instead the rich costumes and ornate decoration traditional to Netherlandish tapestry design.

It is unclear whether the four drawings from 1524 were ever developed as a full-scale set of tapestries. There is, however, circumstantial evidence that a group treating this subject was woven in the mid-1520s from cartoons by van Orley's workshop: a four-piece set of *Romulus and Remus* was purchased by Henry VIII in 1529. Although this set has not survived in the British royal collection, at the end of the eighteenth century a number of fragments were hanging in the House of Lords, where they were copied by John Carter, an antiquarian.<sup>17</sup> The lifesize figures recorded in Carter's copies are stylistically close to the types van Orley used in designs of the late 1520s, such as the *Battle of Pavia*. The largest fragment showed Romulus, seated on a horse, killing Amulius in a composition inspired by that of the central figures in Raphael's *Expulsion of*

*Heliodorus* fresco at the Vatican. The depiction of the surrounding violent melee may have been indebted to a knowledge of the *Victory of Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* in the Vatican's Sala di Costantino (fig. 149). Van Orley probably owed his knowledge of these sources to his contacts with Vincidor and drawings that the latter carried from Rome to Brussels, perhaps during an undocumented journey in connection with the *Life of Christ* cartoons, sometime between 1521 and 1524.

The Romanist concept of an antique battle depicted as an extended frieze with one central focus and multiple points of secondary interest provided the compositional formula for one of van Orley's most ambitious projects of the second half of the decade, the *Battle of Pavia* (see cat. nos. 35, 36, and fig. 140). This monumental seven-piece set commemorated the defeat of the French by the emperor's army in a night battle outside Pavia on February 23–24, 1525. One of the decisive occurrences of the first half of the decade, this conflict resulted in the capture and imprisonment of Francis I in Madrid (which lasted until March 1526) and effectively brought an end to French expansionist policy in the



Italian peninsula. The tapestries depict the principal events of the engagement, and incorporate portraits of the protagonists, including the imperial generals and the French king.

Van Orley's participation in the design process of the *Battle of Pavia* is undocumented, but preparatory drawings for the set (see cat. no. 35) survive that bear all the characteristics of his work.<sup>18</sup> The circumstances surrounding the commissioning of the set remain obscure. We know only that it was presented as a gift to Charles V in March 1531. Assuming that the weavers needed approximately eighteen months to execute the tapestries and that the cartoons took at least twelve months to prepare because of the complexity of the compositions, van Orley must have begun the designs in 1528–29 at the latest. Considering the great detail of these depictions, this monumental series must have required extensive collaboration between van Orley and leading members of the Habsburg court. The preparatory drawings are so close to the final compositions that they must reflect a fairly advanced stage in the design process, when van Orley was synthesizing preliminary studies for figures and landscape components that had already been developed on the basis of written and oral accounts provided by the court.

Although a long tradition of depicting historical events and battles existed in the tapestry medium—in such works as the *Battle of Roosebeke*, the *Battle of Liège*, the *Battle of Formigny* (see fig. 17), and the *Expedition of the Portuguese in North Africa* (see fig. 19)—the *Pavia* set provided a new degree of immediacy, realism, and monu-

mentality, in the treatment of a contemporary event. At the time it was produced it must in fact have been the largest exercise in verisimilitude that had ever been attempted north of the Alps.<sup>19</sup> In the *Battle of Pavia*, as in the *Foundation of Rome* series, the principal dramas are enacted by lifesize figures in the central foregrounds of the scenes. However, in place of the multiple narratives used in the *Foundation of Rome* drawings to populate the remaining areas of the design, the picture plane of each *Pavia* tapestry is filled instead with a multiplicity of anecdotal detail pertaining to actions that take place in a single moment of time, spread throughout a panoramic landscape (whose contours, buildings, trees, and foliage have a decidedly northern European character). In order to achieve this epic combination, van Orley must already have been collaborating with artists who specialized in the rendition of landscapes and figures, both in the design process and in the full-scale cartoons.

It has been suggested that one of van Orley's next and most famous tapestry projects, the so-called *Hunts of Maximilian* (see cat. nos. 37–40, fig. 141), was conceived as a pendant and thematic counterpoint to the *Pavia* set. The series depicts members of the Habsburg court hunting and feasting in recognizable locations around Brussels, and the date of its design can be established on the evidence of the architectural details of the Coudenberg Palace as it is shown in the first panel in the sequence, the *Month of March* (cat. no. 39). This depicts the new chapel, under construction from 1522, with the temporary thatched roof that covered it between



Fig. 140. *Sortie of the Besieged and Flight of the Swiss Mercenaries* (detail) from the *Battle of Pavia*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of the Dermoyn brothers, Brussels, ca. 1531–33. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 435 x 789 cm. Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples



Fig. 141. *February* from the *Hunts of Maximilian*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of the Dermoyen brothers, Brussels, ca. 1531–33. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 440 x 648 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

1528 and 1533. The windows immediately below the straw roof were installed before March 1531.<sup>20</sup> As a duplicate panel of one of the *Hunts* designs had been woven by 1533 (which the Dermoyen firm proposed to send along with a duplicate from the *Pavia* set as samples to the sultan in Constantinople), we can assume that the first edition was complete by that date. All of this suggests that the series was conceived and designed about 1530–31.

The attribution of the *Hunts of Maximilian* depends upon early assignments by van Mander and Félibien and upon two distinct groups of preparatory drawings, one somewhat sketchlike, the other more finished.<sup>21</sup> The former, of which six examples survive (see cat. no. 37), is executed in ink and colored wash and is generally believed to be in van Orley's hand. The second group, a complete series of twelve sheets (see cat. no. 38), executed in brown ink and blue wash, is usually considered a workshop copy, perhaps made for demonstration to a potential patron.<sup>22</sup> These pieces, like the *Pavia* drawings, represent an advanced stage in the design

process, carried out after the principal compositional groups and landscapes had been developed to a high degree by van Orley and his collaborators. We must assume that to accomplish the enormous synthesis of figures and landscape seen here, van Orley depended upon specialist collaborators, just as he did when he produced the *Pavia* drawings.

A clue to the identity of one of these collaborators is provided by the seventeenth-century account of Félibien, who states that van Orley "had under him a certain Tons, a fine landscape painter, who worked with him on the *Hunts of Emperor Maximilian*." His contemporary Henri Sauval also attributed the landscapes to "Tons, the greatest landscapist that there has ever been, uncle to [Philippe] de Champaigne." Neither Félibien nor Sauval provided further information on this topic (their source was probably de Champaigne himself), but support for these claims is given by documentation that a Tons family was closely associated with the van Orleys. Records show that a Jan Tons married Anna van



Capenberghe, one of Bernaert's aunts, in 1494, and that this Jan and his son of the same name were among a group of artists and merchant-weavers who, along with van Orley, were prosecuted in 1527 for listening to sermons by the Lutheran preacher Claes van der Elst. (Although van Orley lost his position as court painter to Margaret of Austria as a result of these proceedings, they do not appear to have significantly interrupted his work or involvement with the Habsburg court.)<sup>23</sup> Félibien's description of "a certain Tons" is echoed by van Mander in his account of a Willem Tons (fl. 1577–79), son of Jan II, in which he characterizes the father as outstanding in painting "cartoons [*patronen*] with all sorts of trees, vegetation, animals, birds, eagles and such, all very beautiful and well done after nature." On the strength of van Mander's account, it seems likely that it was Jan II who played the key role in developing the landscape designs and executing them in the cartoons for the *Hunts of Maximilian*.<sup>24</sup>

A discussion of the collaboration raises the question of the extent to which van Orley himself participated in the execution of the cartoons for the *Pavia* and *Hunts* series. Farmer suggests that he contributed only the preliminary sketches and that once they were completed the work passed into the hands of specialist car-

toonists.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, no single artist could have carried out such large and complicated cartoons. Yet the importance and novel vision of these exceptional cartoons suggest that, at the very least, van Orley closely supervised the teams of artists necessary for their production. Moreover, we might reasonably conclude that van Orley himself was directly involved in the execution of the cartoons on the evidence of the highly individualized character of many of the principal figures as well as their stylistic affinity with protagonists in the *Alba Passion* tapestries.<sup>26</sup> Circumstantial support for this assumption is provided by the fact that other masters of the time worked on cartoons for tapestries: van Orley's pupil Pieter Coecke van Aelst was directly involved in the drawing of the cartoons for the contemporaneous *Story of Saint Paul* (see cat. nos. 45, 46), and Jan Vermeyen did the same for his *Conquest of Tunis* in the late 1540s (see pp. 389–95 and cat. no. 50).

Another set of tapestries conceived by van Orley that can with some certainty be dated to the period about 1530 is the so-called *Genealogy of the House of Nassau*. This group was commissioned from the Dermoyen workshop by Count Henry III of Nassau sometime in 1529–30, and payment for it was made in 1531. The first tapestries had almost been completed in November 1531, at



Fig. 142. Otto, Count of Nassau, and His Wife, Adelheid van Vianden from the *Genealogy of the House of Nassau*. Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1530. Pen and brown ink and color wash over black chalk, 35.7 x 48.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1995 (1995.12)



Fig. 143. *Romulus Giving the Law to the Roman People* from the *Foundation of Rome*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in Brussels, ca. 1535. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 432 x 514 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

which point Henry was urgently awaiting advice from his brother William regarding heraldic details that were to be inserted into them.<sup>27</sup> Although these weavings were destroyed in a fire in 1760, their appearance is known from a set of preliminary drawings by van Orley, executed with his characteristic verve in pen and wash (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich; Metropolitan Museum, New York; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Rennes).<sup>28</sup> In these sheets the principal elements, portraits of equestrian figures and their costumes (which vary in accordance with the era in which the person depicted lived), as well as the layouts of the landscapes, are indicated in some detail, but the borders are only sketched in summary fashion on some of them. Several of the drawings also include written instructions for the further development of the designs, which suggests that more detailed drawings executed by workshop assistants were to follow. The landscape components offered van Orley's specialist collaborators great opportunities to display their skills.

Here it should be noted that the borders are included as part of the designs in some of the *Nassau Genealogy* drawings (but not fig. 142). Farmer has maintained that this was unusual, such components normally being left to the cartoonists. In fact, however, van Orley appears to have included the border as part of the overall conception of the design from his earliest involvement with the tapestry industry, starting with the border of the *Notre Dame du Sablon* set, and to have continued to do so throughout his career.

Two other design series made for members and intimates of the Habsburg family should also be mentioned at this point. Although neither is documented, they can be related to van Orley on the basis of pronounced stylistic links with his other work. The first, known as the *Spheres*, shows the celestial realms according to the Ptolemaic system.<sup>29</sup> It was woven for John III, king of Portugal, and his wife, Catherine, Charles V's sister, and incorporates their portraits in the guise of Jupiter and Juno in one of the tapestries (fig. 112). Their style suggests a date of conception in the late 1520s or early 1530s. The second series was a radical reworking of van Orley's *Foundation of Rome* designs (see figs. 138, 139). (We can assume that the new designs were conceived for a member of the Habsburg court because the Order of the Golden Fleece, associated with that house, hangs around the neck of a figure shown in one of the scenes, *Romulus Giving the Law to the Roman People*, fig. 143).<sup>30</sup> Whereas the violent and dramatic incidents of the narrative appear in the foregrounds of the earlier compositions, they are largely relegated to the backgrounds of the later series, whose foregrounds are occupied by courtly scenes populated by richly costumed figures. Although the reworked set is often dated to the late 1520s, its richness of ornamentation and layering of allegorical and symbolic meaning indicate that it was more likely executed in the mid-1530s.

During the 1530s, at the same time he was conceiving tapestries for members or associates of the Habsburg court, van Orley was continuing to supply designs to the Brussels and Antwerp merchants. Identification of this work is not straightforward, however, because van Orley appears to have been less directly involved in the execution of the cartoons. In fact, he may even have delegated the elaboration of some of the designs to assistants, perhaps following the model of the Raphael workshop of which he would have learned from Vincidor. Attributions to the master are also problematic because a number of anonymous artists may have been emulating van Orley's style by the early 1530s.

The benchmark for van Orley's noncourt commissions is provided by the *Story of Jacob*, which may have been ordered by the merchant-weaver Willem de Kempeneer as a speculative venture. The first documented set made after the *Jacob* cartoons, and probably their first weaving, was completed by 1534, when Kempeneer sold a ten-piece group on the subject to the Antwerp merchant Joris Vezeleer (possibly the same panels subsequently recorded in the English royal collection).<sup>31</sup> If this was the first weaving, we can assume that the series was conceived and designed in 1531–32. A complete set of ten pieces, acquired by Cardinal Campeggio before 1539, survives today in Brussels (see fig. 144).<sup>32</sup> The long-standing assumption that van Orley designed the *Story of Jacob*





Fig. 144. *The Blessing of Esau* from the *Story of Jacob*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the workshop of Willem de Kempeneer, Brussels, before 1539. Wool and silk, 424 x 680 cm. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels

was confirmed by the discovery of the artist's name woven into the design on the last piece of Campeggio's set.<sup>33</sup> However, as Delmarcel has noted, the heterogeneous character of various scenes may well indicate that, although van Orley executed the preparatory drawings for the entire series, the master was closely involved only with the production of the cartoons for the first four pieces.<sup>34</sup>

The *Jacob* series is of great interest because it provided the narrative formula that was to characterize much Netherlandish tapestry production for forty years after its completion. In place of the panoramic scenes of a single moment of time that marked the *Pavia* and *Hunts of Maximilian* sets, van Orley returned to the more traditional device of utilizing architectural and landscape features to separate the different elements of a multiple narrative. The choice of subjects appears to have been calculated to focus on moments of psychological insight and dramatic impact and to establish a sense of suspenseful anticipation as the viewer moves from one episode to the next.<sup>35</sup> Although the dividers that separate scenes include Renaissance forms, they are drawn from an earlier

tradition, providing rich, decorative filling between the narrative components. At the same time, the vividly realized muscular figures occupying stagelike interiors rendered in realistic perspective clearly recall the compositional formula of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles*.

A number of other series of the mid-1530s are stylistically close to the *Story of Jacob*. One, a *Story of David*, is recorded in five preparatory sketches (British Museum, London), in which the figures and division of narrative components by architectural elements display all the hallmarks of van Orley's work. One of the drawings is dated 1531 and carries an early inscription "Pieter Coecke van Aelst," but its style is much closer to that of van Orley than of his pupil.<sup>36</sup> Whether the *David* designs originated in van Orley's workshop and these drawings were executed by an able assistant, or whether they are the product of an anonymous artist who had precociously absorbed the lessons of van Orley's art is open to question.

Another series of the time that van Orley may have designed is the *Story of Iphigenia*, which Kempeneer sold to Vezeleer in 1534. This is probably to be identified with the ten-piece set of this

subject recorded in the French royal collection in an inventory of 1551.<sup>37</sup> That set has not survived, but a single panel with an unidentified classical theme in the Metropolitan Museum collection, which bears the mark of the Kempeneer workshop, may in fact come from a reweaving of it.<sup>38</sup> Closely related to this example is a single piece of *Coriolanus before Rome with Veturia and Volumnia*, now in the Spanish royal collection.<sup>39</sup> Another orphan panel with notable stylistic links to the *Jacob* series is at Laarne château in Belgium. Depicting the interior of a rich man's house, this hanging may derive from a lost set of the *Ages of Man* or the *Twelve Months*.<sup>40</sup> Affinities with the *Jacob* designs are also in evidence in the set traditionally called the *Months of Lucas*, known from an incomplete sixteenth-century set and copies executed at the Gobelins Manufactory in the late seventeenth century. Here the landscapes and figures are stylistically similar to, and in some cases directly based on, models in the *Hunts of Maximilian*.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, mention should be made of various drawings with allegorical subjects, probably dating from the early to mid-1530s (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin; Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden; British Museum, London; Albertina, Vienna), that are linked to an otherwise undocumented set of designs. Evidently in van Orley's hand, these sheets and their relationship to one another have yet to be studied in detail.<sup>42</sup>

This list of van Orley-style designs from the mid-1530s is by no means exhaustive but offers an indication of the type of work produced by van Orley's atelier during the period. And evidence that van Orley was still designing tapestries in the final years of his life is provided by documentation relating to the acquisition by Mencía de Mendoza of a set of eight tapestries described as "de las muertas,"<sup>43</sup> for which van Orley provided the designs in September 1539. Intended for the Mendoza family funerary chapel at Valencia, nothing more of this set is known.

Two other notable designs that were probably created about 1540–41, a *Story of Abraham* (see cat. no. 48) and a *Story of Caesar* (see fig. 174), may also owe something to the master's intervention. The first weavings of these ten-piece sets were likely purchased by Henry VIII in 1543–44.<sup>44</sup> Both groups incorporate figures and architectural components reminiscent of those in the designs van Orley

provided for windows in the Cathedral of Saint Michel (then called Saint Gudule) in 1539–40. Indeed, the development of the windows may clarify the evolution, authorship, and character of these two tapestry series. Work had been completed on the two windows in the transepts of the cathedral and the first window in the chapel of Saint-Sacrement de Miracle before van Orley's death in 1541. After van Orley died, work on the second window in the chapel was taken over by Michiel Coxcie. Coxcie purchased van Orley's preliminary drawings as well as other "diverse, small-scale drawings" from the master's son Jerome and then enlarged the original designs into full cartoons.<sup>45</sup> Although Coxcie adhered to the compositional format of van Orley's windows in his scheme, he introduced a number of variations in the architectural details, and in the subsequent windows he designed for the chapel he departed more and more from his predecessor's concept. A similar kind of creative process may account for the heterogeneous character of the *Abraham* and *Caesar* sets, which, however, reflect the involvement of Coecke rather than Coxcie (see pp. 387–88 and cat. no. 48).

By the time he died in 1541, van Orley had fundamentally altered the character of Netherlandish tapestry design. In developing an entirely new style for the tapestry medium, he harnessed the talents of the Brussels cartoonists under his guidance, took full advantage of the technical proficiency and specialized skills of the Brussels weavers, and capitalized on the opportunities provided by a number of well-funded commissions. Drawing on both the Netherlandish and Italian traditions, his new vision embraced detailed observation of the real world, complex anecdotal and narrative incident, lifesize figures integrated into realistic space, and the expression of exaggerated emotion. This synthesis reached maturity in the *Battle of Pavia*, the *Hunts of Maximilian*, and the *Story of Jacob* series. In these sequences vital realism, epic drama, and discursive narrative come together on an unprecedented scale, embodying an immense achievement not only in terms of the tapestry medium but also in large-scale figurative design in general. During the years after van Orley's death these monumental series would provide the model for the work of the master's leading pupils, Pieter Coecke and Michiel Coxcie.



1. The principal studies of van Orley's work as a tapestry designer are Farmer 1981, pp. 264–336, and Ainsworth 1982. Also important are Delmarcel 1984; Ainsworth 1990; Delmarcel 1992; Farmer 1994; and Mechelen 2000, pp. 29–35. For further bibliography, see Ainsworth in Grove 1996, vol. 23, pp. 523–28.
2. Friedländer 1972, p. 101, no. 82, pls. 71–73.
3. Farmer 1981, pp. 49–122.
4. Farmer 1994.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
6. "[W]aer in hy hadde een sonderlinge vast en veerdige handelinge en wierdter seer heerlijk van betaelt"; van Mander 1604, fol. 211.
7. Mechelen 2000, pp. 29–35.
8. Delmarcel 1992.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 138–40.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
11. *Ibid.*
12. See Shearman 1972, p. 138, and Ainsworth 1982, p. 33.
13. Friedländer 1972, p. 102, no. 85, pls. 78–81; Farmer 1981, pp. 123–48; Dacos 1987c, pp. 614–16.
14. Ainsworth 1982, pp. 100–101, 117–22; Ainsworth 1990, esp. pp. 60–61.
15. Ainsworth 1990, pp. 43–45; Farmer 1994, pp. 30–31.
16. Wegner 1973, pp. 24–25; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 76–79; Munich 1989, pp. 63–65, nos. 50–53; Delmarcel in Munich, Mechelen, and Amsterdam 1993, pp. 64–66.
17. T. Campbell 1998c.
18. Ainsworth 1982, pp. 87–88.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
20. De Jonge in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 80–97, esp. pp. 84–86.
21. Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 54–71.
22. Ainsworth 1982, pp. 79–87; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 60–71.
23. Félibien 1685–88, vol. 1, p. 553; Sauval 1724, vol. 3, p. 10; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 57, 72–73.
24. Van Mander 1604, fol. 230; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 71–73; Farmer 1994, pp. 28–29.
25. Farmer 1994, pp. 38–39.
26. Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 70–71.
27. Fock 1969, p. 2.
28. Fock 1969; Wegner 1973, pp. 22–25, nos. 82–85; Munich 1989, pp. 58–62.
29. Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, pp. 54–67.
30. Delmarcel in Munich, Mechelen, and Amsterdam 1993, pp. 64–91.
31. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 178–79.
32. Crick-Kuntziger 1954.
33. Joos 1985.
34. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 124.
35. Ainsworth 1982, pp. 161–63.
36. Marlier 1966, pp. 342–44; Farmer 1981, p. 299.
37. Crick-Kuntziger 1954, p. 34; Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, pp. 261, 289.
38. Standen 1985, pp. 115–18.
39. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, p. 104.
40. Farmer 1981, pp. 307–8.
41. Standen 1971; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 77–78.
42. Farmer 1981, pp. 277–81; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 74–75.
43. Steppe 1969a, p. 475.
44. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 232–33.
45. Farmer 1994, pp. 35–36; Vanden Bemden 1993.

30.

## The Last Supper

From a four-piece set of the *Passion* (known as the *Alba Passion*)

Design by Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1524–26

Probably woven by Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1525–28

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
363 x 351 cm (11 ft. 11 in. x 11 ft. 6 in.)

10–12 warps per cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1915)

31.

## Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

From a four-piece set of the *Passion* (known as the *Alba Passion*)

Design by Bernaert van Orley, 1520

Probably woven by Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1525–28

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
369 x 358 cm (12 ft. 1¼ in. x 11 ft. 9 in.)

10–12 warps per cm

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Widener Collection 1942 (1942.9.447)

32.

## Christ Carrying the Cross

From a four-piece set of the *Passion* (known as the *Alba Passion*)

Design by Bernaert van Orley, 1520

Probably woven by Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1525–28

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
345 x 345 cm (11 ft. 3¾ in. x 11 ft. 3¾ in.)

10–12 warps per cm

Musée Jacquemart-André / Institut de France, Paris (2033)

33.

## The Crucifixion

From a four-piece set of the *Passion* (known as the *Alba Passion*)

Design by Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1524–26

Probably woven by Pieter de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1525–28

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
364 x 354 cm (11 ft. 11¼ in. x 11 ft. 7¾ in.)

10–12 warps per cm

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Widener Collection, 1942 (1942.9.448)

PROVENANCE: 1528, imported by Edward Smytting to England for sale to Cardinal Wolsey or Henry VIII (?); 1547, possibly to be identified with four pieces of the “riche historye of the passion” listed at the Tower; before 1654, purchased by the Spanish ambassador Don Alonso de Cárdenas on behalf of Don Luis de Haro (?); 1658, de Haro bequeathed to the estate of the House of El Carpio (?); by descent to duke of Alba collection (?); April 7–20, 1877, three of the set (*Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, the *Crucifixion*) sold with the collection of the duke of Berwick and Alba, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, salles 8 and 9, nos. 5–7; *Christ Carrying the Cross* subsequently went to the Musée Jacquemart-André, while *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and the *Crucifixion* went to the Widener Collection and thence, in 1942, to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; before 1913, the *Last Supper* acquired by Philip Lehman; 1975, the *Last Supper* given by Robert Lehman to the Metropolitan Museum.

REFERENCES: Valentiner 1913, p. 57; Valentiner 1922, p. 301; Göbel 1923, p. 416; Ackerman 1924, p. 40; Hunter 1925, pp. 126, 127; Hunter 1926; Musée Jacquemart-André 1926, p. 132; Friedländer 1930, p. 127; McCall 1932, p. 25; Ackerman 1933, pp. 378, 381; Baldass 1944, p. 186; Marlier 1966, p. 106, n. 32; Friedländer 1972, pp. 77 no. 3, 119 no. 31; Szabó 1975, p. 61; Steppe in Brussels 1976, pp. 70–71; Delmarcel 1981b, p. 230, n. 20; Farmer 1981, pp. 309–10; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 51–56; Huygue in Paris 1984, pp. 36–37; Geissler in Stuttgart 1984, pp. 138–39; Adelson in Vatican City 1984, pp. 277–80; Standen 1985, pp. 65–73; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 49–53; Ainsworth 1990, pp. 48–61; Delmarcel 1991, p. 121; Delmarcel 1992, passim; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 72–79; Farmer 1994, pp. 28–29; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 93, 190–92; Paredes in Brussels 2000, pp. 62–81.

CONDITION: Good. Although generally faded and worn, with some weft loss and exposed warps, the overall tonal balance of the four *Alba Passion* tapestries is well preserved. The *Last Supper* and *Christ Carrying the Cross* were conserved (in New York and Paris respectively) prior to the exhibition.

34.

## The Crucifixion

Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1524–26

Pen and brown ink over black chalk underdrawing, gray and brownish wash on paper

35.1 x 37.1 cm (13⅜ x 14⅞ in.)

Inscribed *Bernhard van Brüssel* (by a later hand, lower left); *Bernart van Orley. Anders genaemt Bernart van Brüssel* (verso, perhaps in an 18th-century hand)

Graphische Sammlung, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (1720)

PROVENANCE: by the 19th century, Königliches Kupferstichkabinett, Stuttgart.

REFERENCES: Geissler in Stuttgart 1984, pp. 138–39, no. 93; Hartleb in Leipzig and Munich 1998, no. 1/5.

The arrival of Raphael’s cartoons for the *Acts of the Apostles* series in Brussels in 1516–17 was the catalyst for Bernaert van Orley’s reformulation of his design concept for tapestries, wherein he transformed them from woven paintings to vehicles whose style befits the grand scale of the medium. This *Passion* series, known as the *Alba Passion*, represents the first major step toward the artist’s greatest achievements in this regard, namely the *Hunts of Maximilian* and the *Battle of Pavia* series. The considerable importance of the Alba set also lies in its secure attribution and date, which may be inferred from one of the few surviving documents that link van Orley with tapestry design.

On September 1, 1520, van Orley witnessed the signing of a contract stipulating that Pieter de Pannemaker, Margaret of Austria’s tapestry weaver, was to produce two tapestries, a *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and a *Christ Carrying the Cross*, matching in quality and materials two others that had already been executed.<sup>1</sup> These earlier panels, we learn from another document, were a *Crucifixion* and a *Descent from the Cross*, designed in a style that had been current about 1518. The *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and the *Christ Carrying the Cross* were delivered in 1522 and were augmented in 1531 by a *Last Supper* ordered by Charles V from Pieter de Pannemaker. Together these tapestries form what is called the “square” *Passion*, now in the Palacio Real, Madrid (figs. 131–34).

The *Alba Passion* shares with the “square” *Passion* the designs for *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and *Christ Carrying the Cross* but









Detail of cat. no. 30

includes new designs for the *Last Supper* and an altogether different *Crucifixion*. The borders of the Alba set, unlike those of the “square” *Passion*, show scrolling leaves, fruits, flowers, hazelnuts, and peapods on a dark pink ground and extensive use of silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread.

The grand scale of tapestries presented vast pictorial planes that had to be filled with narrative elements clear enough to be read easily from a significant distance. This required van Orley to consider a new way to organize space and to develop a sense of verisimilitude he had not achieved in his paintings. From Raphael’s example van Orley learned how to arrange massive

full-scale figures in a well-structured space and realized the power of visual hyperbole to effectively convey the meaning of themes. Perhaps through discussions with Tommaso Vincidor, Raphael’s workshop representative and *cartonnier* in Brussels, van Orley came to recognize in Raphael’s work a consistency of approach to historical authenticity and a characterization of gesture and expression that combined elegance, eloquence, and emphasis.<sup>2</sup> But he looked to Dürer, who sojourned in the Low Countries in 1520–21, for a model that would temper the monumentality of Raphael’s style, garnering from the German’s art a sense of heightened emotional appeal and anecdotal detail tradi-

tional in Northern representations. The *Passion* series exemplifies the conflation of the art of Raphael and Dürer as reformulated by van Orley, and it provides a key to the artistic milieu of Brussels in the 1520s.

#### *Description and Iconography of the Tapestries*

The Alba *Passion* consists of four tapestries that portray the most emotionally charged events of the Passion narrative recounted in the Gospels: the Last Supper, Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ Carrying the Cross, and the Crucifixion. Although the first three include references to previous and subsequent events, in a departure from the convention of contem-



porary tapestry design, these motifs are relegated to the background and are so diminished in size that they are barely recognizable. Only the *Crucifixion* has no accompanying scenes, as if to signal emphatically the end of the series and convey metaphorically the finality of Christ's earthly existence.

The episodes take place in settings appropriate to the subject treated, varying from rocky landscapes to city views. Placed within these suitable environments, and viewed close-up in an immediate and direct way, the scenes are presented like the tableaux vivants that were performed as part of the pageants, triumphal entries, and religious processions of the day. This parallel is vividly expressed by an observation made concerning a tableau vivant staged for the entry of Philip of Spain into Louvain during his 1549–50 visit to the Low Countries: “the expression of the actors, both men and women, offered a marvelous spectacle: one could say a tapestry come to life.”<sup>3</sup> For the sake of clarity, the protagonists in the tapestries are identified by inscriptions on the hems of their garments: IHESUS. NASAREN in *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and IHESUS NASAREN and MATER CHRISTI in *Christ Carrying the Cross*, for example. There are, as well, other inscriptions—a meaningless one in fictive Hebrew on a pink tablet above Christ's head in the *Last Supper* and in the same panel MEI on the neckline border of Christ's robe and N[or M]OA on his right cuff, words that suggest a dialogue. A full verse emanates from Christ's mouth in *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*: PATER SI NO[N] POTEST HIC CALYX TRA[S]SIRE NISI BIBA[M] ILLU[M] FIAT VOLU[N]TAS TUA. From Matthew 26:42, it is Jesus' ardent supplication: “Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” Such texts provided keys for a nuanced reading of the woven representations.

John 13:2–20 describes Christ washing the feet of the disciples, a subject visible in the distance beyond the splendidly decorated Italian Renaissance room in which the central drama unfolds in van Orley's *Last Supper*. Each disciple is present, and some of them can be identified: John rests on the Savior's chest (John 13:25), and at the lower right, Judas rises to leave, his purse already filled with the payment he has received for his promised betrayal of Christ. Van Orley's textual source for this image was Luke 22:14–23, the only account among the four Gospels that



Detail of cat. no. 30

places the sharing of bread and wine just before rather than after the moment of Christ's warning that one of the assembled will betray him (Luke 22:21: “But, behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.”). This explains why Judas is present while the bread is on the table and the wine is being poured in the

foreground of the scene. The MEI on the collar of Christ's robe most likely refers to part of the text in I Corinthians that signals the institution of the Eucharist (11:24): “This do in remembrance of me.” But the excited reactions of the disciples, who anxiously gesture and talk among themselves, debating the identity of the traitor,









Detail of cat. no. 31

result from Christ's declaration of the perfidy of one of them. The lavishly dressed innkeeper, oblivious to the exchanges taking place, pours wine for one of the disciples.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke write of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. However, it was apparently Luke's account that inspired van Orley, for his text alone mentions details rendered literally in the woven version: the appearance of the angel to strengthen the resolve of Christ as he utters his plea, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (22:42–43). And it is only Luke who describes Christ praying so earnestly that sweat pours from him like great drops of blood falling upon the ground (22:44), a particular detail van Orley did not omit. In the foreground of the tapestry are Peter, John, and

James, sleeping apart from the other disciples, who nestle among the hills in the middle ground. Behind them is the city of Jerusalem, and a bit closer in, soldiers advance to arrest Christ. Barely visible in the distance at the right is an earlier episode of the Passion, in which Christ takes leave of his mother before going to Jerusalem.

Matthew (27:17–26, 31–32), Mark (15:9–15, 21), Luke (23:13–27), and John (18:38–40; 19:17) give little or no consideration to the *Ecce Homo*, which occurs in the background of the tapestry showing Christ Carrying the Cross. However, the latter episode, replete as it is with anguish and physical pain, was a favorite subject in sixteenth-century Passion tracts, which augmented the brief biblical accounts.<sup>4</sup> These elaborate contemporary narratives describe the kind of figures van Orley portrays in his panel on the

theme: the mocking musicians and the jeering, poking, menacing, shouting soldiers, one of whom torments Christ with the butt end of a halberd while another kicks his side as he stumbles on his way to Golgotha. In striking contrast are the individuals who embrace Christ's suffering as their own: the Virgin (labeled *MATER CHRISTI* on the hem of her dress) reaching for her son as she is supported by John; Veronica extending her veil to wipe the Savior's face, whose image will imprint the cloth; the two attendant holy women wailing in exaggerated gestures of sorrow; and, at the far left, Simon of Cyrene lifting the burden of the weighty cross. Christ directly addresses the viewer in an appeal for empathy with his suffering.

The *Crucifixion*, as the final panel of the set, portrays the dramatic moment just after





Detail of cat. no. 31

Christ's death. Blood and water pour forth from a wound in Christ's side, which, according to John (19:34), was pierced after his death by a soldier with a lance. This centurion, usually identified as Longinus in the synoptic Gospels, here points toward Christ and, as reported by Mark (15:39), utters to his comrade: "Truly this man was the Son of God." The two thieves writhe in pain, their legs having been cruelly broken by the soldiers to hasten their deaths. The bad thief, Gestas, turns away, resigned to his damnation, while the good thief, Dismas, looks toward the Savior and, begging not to be forgotten, receives his blessing. In compassionate identification with her son, the Virgin collapses in grief and is comforted by the attending

Marys.<sup>5</sup> John, in utter despair, makes a last mournful appeal, his hands clasped and raised above his head toward Christ in supplication. At the lower right a workman resolutely gathers the tools used to fix the three condemned men to their crosses and prepares to take his leave.

There is a subtle emphasis in the series on both the sacrament of Holy Communion and on a Protestant interpretation of it. This is evident not only in the texts woven into the tapestries but also in details of representation, some of which have already been pointed out. In the *Last Supper* the paschal lamb is absent and the dish at the center of the table that would have held it supports the large chalice filled with wine. Luther repudiated the notion of the sacri-

fice of the Mass, symbolized by the slaughtered lamb, as an abomination. But he believed that Christ can be present in the Supper through his suffering and death, and that partaking of the bread and the wine signifies the fellowship of all as members of Christ's spiritual body. Therefore, bread has been placed on the table before the disciples, and the innkeeper pours wine. The  $\text{M}\epsilon\text{I}$  that appears on the collar of Christ's robe is a fragment of his words spoken at the breaking of bread and drinking of wine, "This do in remembrance of me."

In *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* the attending angel holds the eucharistic chalice as Christ utters the words "remove this cup from me," thereby emphasizing the connection of







Christ's suffering with the sacrament of Holy Communion. In addition, this image and inscription may well be a subtle reference to the noted Chalice Controversy first initiated by Martin Luther in "A Treatise Concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ" of 1519. Luther defied Catholic doctrine and maintained that laymen should receive the chalice in addition to the Host as a means of strengthening one's faith in believing what the sacrament signifies.<sup>6</sup> By featuring the chalice in his tapestry design, van Orley underscores this concept.

If this interpretation of the tapestries is correct, the details of the design suggest van Orley's own Lutheran leanings. Evidence to support this theory comes from an account of 1527 that describes the interrogation of van Orley and a number of weavers and *cartonniers* after they attended sermons of the reformed preacher Claes van der Elst in clandestine meetings in the master's home.<sup>7</sup> Van Orley's presumed decision to present a Lutheran reading of the biblical events in these weavings may well have been influenced by the example of Albrecht Dürer. Dürer's *Last Supper* woodcut of 1523 was produced from preliminary drawings, under way as early as 1520–21, when he was in the Low Countries, for the so-called *Oblong Passion*, which was never completed as a print series.<sup>8</sup> In this woodcut, Dürer emphasized the chalice and the bread and eliminated the paschal lamb—all departures from his two previous woodcuts on the theme.<sup>9</sup>

#### Style and Relevance

Van Orley's exceptional achievement in this series rests in his savvy assimilation of stylistic influences plumbed from the works of Raphael and Dürer and his reformulation of those influences in his own designs. Here for the first time he successfully integrated figures within expansive landscape settings. By about 1520, in the *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and the *Christ Carrying the Cross*, he began to treat these settings more fully than he had previously, developing a convincing deep space and an illusionistic description of landscape relatively unexplored in his necessarily smaller paintings. This was an approach fundamental to the sense of naturalism van Orley sought to convey. The veracity of the events at hand is enhanced by these landscapes, since each setting is varied to suit the subject portrayed: the *Last Supper*

appropriately takes place in an upper room of a house, as indicated by the architecture viewed through the openings in the back wall; *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* unfolds in rugged yet enclosed surroundings; *Christ Carrying the Cross* shows a central tunnel space of clearly defined receding vertical and horizontal planes bordered at the left by emphatic orthogonals of city gate, wall, and trees and at the right by the rocky outcropping, which reinforce the procession of figures from the city gate at the left to Golgotha at the upper right; beyond the central scene of the *Crucifixion* is an endless landscape of overlapping hills and the city of Jerusalem in the distance, its infinite recession lending a sense of eternity to the event. The landscapes in their distinctly different treatments not only reinforce the particular meanings of the individual scenes but also indicate movement through time and space, presenting the subjects as historical events in a developing continuum.

*Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* is one of the most accomplished representations in tapestry of man in nature from the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The great attention to variety of detail in both the foreground and the far distance sets it apart from its predecessors. And it is the treatment of landscape in this panel that most clearly raises the question of whether van Orley collaborated on the series with the mysterious Tons, mentioned by both Félibien and Sauval as the artist who provided the landscapes for the *Hunts of Maximilian* (see cat. nos. 39, 40).<sup>10</sup> If such a collaboration did indeed exist, it could have taken place either with Jan II Tons (ca. 1500–1569/70), who would have been about twenty years old when the *Passion* series was produced, or with his father, Jan I (1467–last mentioned 1529), who must have been about fifty-three at the time.<sup>11</sup> Both were related to the van Orley family, Jan I having married the sister-in-law of Valentin van Orley, Bernaert's father.<sup>12</sup>

Comparison of the landscapes in the *Garden of Gethsemane* and those of the *Hunts* series shows similarities in the motifs used and their placement within the compositions: for example, there are foreground tree stumps strangled by dense masses of roots, bare branches sprouting from rocks, paired trees in the middle distance, and a variety of tree types with climbing vegetation on their trunks. Such parallels suggest that if neither Tons was directly involved by providing the preparatory drawings and cartoons

for the landscape elements in the *Passion* series, then one or the other perhaps influenced van Orley's own development of this genre. Among his paintings from the years prior to the production of the Alba panels only the left wing of the 1521 *Altarpiece of the Visitations of Job* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels), shows proficiency in the depiction of landscape. Moreover, the one extant drawing for the tapestries of the *Passion* series, the *Crucifixion* in Stuttgart (cat. no. 34), concentrates on the arrangement of the figures and only summarily indicates the background landscape. Later, however, in van Orley's preliminary drawings of the 1530s for the *Hunts of Maximilian* (see cat. nos. 37, 38) and for the subsequent *Genealogy of the House of Nassau* (see fig. 142), the landscape settings are detailed and seamlessly integrated with the figures, and both are certainly drawn by the same hand. We might reasonably conclude that working in tapestry design and influenced by the specialists in the medium whom he employed in his workshop sparked van Orley's creative energy in the new genre of landscape, the *Alba Passion* showing his impressive early achievement in this realm.

In the *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* the overwhelming impact of Dürer's art is felt, while it is Raphael's example that has most clearly influenced the *Christ Carrying the Cross*. The conflation of these two inspirations and their reformulation by van Orley are impressively accomplished in the later *Last Supper* and *Crucifixion*. The Stuttgart drawing, as we shall see, shows these developments in progress.

Dürer's prints were already circulating in the Low Countries before he made his famous trip there in 1520–21,<sup>13</sup> so it is difficult to say when van Orley first encountered them. It may be that van Orley's earliest impulse to look to Dürer's art arose when van Orley hosted an elaborate dinner party for the German in Brussels at some point between August 26 and September 3, 1520.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, on this occasion Dürer gave van Orley an engraved *Passion* and made a portrait of him in charcoal.<sup>15</sup> Immediately thereafter, during a trip to Antwerp undertaken from September 3 to October 4 Dürer met Margaret of Austria and gave her a complete set of his works, presumably the printed oeuvre.<sup>16</sup> In his capacity as Margaret's official court painter, van Orley would certainly have had access to these prints. Moreover, Dürer's





Detail of cat. no. 32













Fig. 145. *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*. Albrecht Dürer, 1508. Engraving, 11.4 x 7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Fletcher Fund, 1919 (19.73.4)

journals record that he was sought out in Antwerp by Tommaso Vincidor, to whom he gave a complete set of his prints in exchange for engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael's designs.<sup>17</sup> This interaction is exemplary of the contemporary artistic milieu of the Low Countries, a milieu that surely inspired van Orley to seek design solutions in the work of both Dürer and Raphael.

The models for the specific details of the design of van Orley's *Garden of Gethsemane*—the angel appearing in the cloud, Christ in a three-quarter or nearly frontal view, the gate to the garden positioned to one side at the extreme back, the sleepy poses and L-shaped deployment of the three disciples—can all be found in one or another of Dürer's *Garden of Gethsemane* prints from the *Large Passion*, 1497–98, the *Small Engraved Passion*, 1508 (fig. 145), and the *Small Woodcut Passion*, about 1510. It has also been suggested that Dürer's drawing of the same subject for his *Oblong Passion* dated 1520 (fig. 146), and thus executed while he was in the Low Countries, may have provided yet another inspiration for van Orley.<sup>18</sup> Here it is relevant to note that a painting by van Orley of Christ in



Fig. 146. *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*. Albrecht Dürer, 1520. Pen and brown ink on paper, 20.9 x 27.9 cm. Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe

the Garden of Gethsemane now in the Louvre clearly shows the artist's direct debt to Dürer's compositions and motifs.<sup>19</sup>

Although van Orley took his primary inspiration for the *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* tapestry from Dürer, he found the means to create emotive power in this piece, as in others, in Raphael's art. The frontal view of Christ with his arms outstretched and head thrown back in near-profile view in the weaving is derived from the figure of Stephen in the *Stoning of Stephen*, one of the lost cartoons for Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* series. Van Orley studied Stephen's pose, changing the figure to a female in a drawing in the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich.<sup>20</sup> The sheet was then used in the workshop for tapestry designs and paintings, serving as the basis for both male and female figures, such as Christ in the *Gethsemane* and Saint John and Mary Magdalen in other works.<sup>21</sup>

Van Orley's most significant encounter with Raphael's art must have occurred with the arrival in Brussels in late 1516 and early 1517 of the cartoons for the *Acts of the Apostles*, which were woven for Pope Leo X in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst and completed by 1520–21.

Certainly van Orley was acquainted with Vincidor, who doubtless was instrumental in communicating Raphael's design approach. And he clearly knew a composition by the Italian master that slightly preceded the more famous *Acts of the Apostles*, namely the *Spasimo di Sicilia*, which first appeared as a painting of 1516 (Prado, Madrid) and was made into a tapestry for Cardinal Bibbiena between 1516 and 1520 in Brussels (cat. no. 25);<sup>22</sup> for his *Christ Carrying the Cross*, van Orley adapted its U-shaped design and the group of the Virgin, Saint John, and the two Marys at the lower right. Above all, he focused upon the encounter between Mary and the stumbling Christ as it is shown in the *Spasimo di Sicilia*. The striking female mourner at the far right of van Orley's scene, however, may have been inspired by the figure of Saint Paul rending his garments in Raphael's *Sacrifice at Lystra* from the *Acts of the Apostles*. In his quest for elements with powerful emotive force he may have borrowed not only from Raphael but also from his own work; he used the kicking soldier from the outside wing of his *Furnes Triptych*, commissioned in 1515 and completed in 1520 (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique,









Detail of cat. no. 33

Brussels). And he may have taken the motif of the stumbling Christ, kicked and beaten by his tormentors, from a small background scene in the Forlì *Crucifixion* (Museo Civico, Forlì), whose design was woven in Brussels between about 1500 and 1515.<sup>23</sup>

In the mid-1520s, by the time van Orley was working on his two new designs for the Alba set, the *Last Supper* and the *Crucifixion*, he had more thoroughly integrated the approaches of Raphael and Dürer. As with the *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*, van Orley took his primary inspiration from Dürer. The general disposition of the figures in van Orley's *Last Supper*

and in Dürer's woodcut of this subject in the *Large Passion* (1511)<sup>24</sup> are the same: in each, Christ is placed at the central axis of the composition, his arm around the sleeping John; at the right, Judas (his moneybag in hand) is poised to leave; and at the far left, an attendant, unaware of the activity taking place, pours wine. As noted above, the Lutheran interpretation of the subject very likely derived from Dürer's woodcut of the *Last Supper* of 1523 or a preparatory drawing for it.

Van Orley, however, once again followed Raphael's lead by endowing his *Last Supper* with an emotional pitch more intense than that

of Dürer's prototypes. The heightened expressiveness of van Orley's interpretation, conveyed for the most part by his massive figures and their exaggerated gestures, is fed by the model of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* cartoons, for example the *Conversion of the Proconsul*. For the setting of Italian Renaissance architecture and its dazzling ornamental detail, van Orley also looked to Raphael and probably to Leonardo as well. In addition, Raphael or Leonardo or both artists may have provided the source for the receding perspective of the room and for the delineation of the windows on the back wall in van Orley's design.<sup>25</sup> Both Italians had made renditions







of the *Last Supper* that were produced as engravings, which were widely disseminated.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Leonardo's *Last Supper* fresco had been translated into a woven version for Francis, count of Angoulême, in 1514 (fig. 67), a tapestry van Orley might have known.

There is no better insight into van Orley's struggle with the translation of the art of Raphael and of Dürer into his own idiom than that offered by his preliminary drawing in Stuttgart for the *Crucifixion* in the *Passion* series (cat. no. 34). Van Orley had treated the *Crucifixion* theme in a painting of about 1515–18 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford). This composition typifies the standard contemporary Northern representations with one notable variation: he introduced a figural group from an engraving after Mantegna's *Deposition of Christ* of about 1475 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), slightly modifying the prototype. The Stuttgart drawing, however, definitively reflects the new wave of influence from Raphael and Dürer. Here Dürer's *Crucifixion* engraving of 1508, with its animated Saint John in an exaggerated pose featuring raised hands joined in a passionate entreaty, provided a powerful model suited to intensify the emotional expressiveness of van Orley's representation. But for this sheet van Orley also adapted the crouching workman from Raphael's *Stoning of Saint Stephen*<sup>27</sup> and changed the two gesturing soldiers in Dürer's *Crucifixion* into massive, imposing figures that are out of scale and spatially inconsistent with the rest of the composition. The disjointedness of the Stuttgart drawing was amended in the final cartoon and the weaving itself, in which the disparate features of the scene are marvelously well balanced and naturally arranged. Here the two soldiers and the crouching workman are pushed back in space and diminished in size relative to the other figures, and the two thieves have been added. Such considerable changes would have been made in another preliminary drawing and later implemented by the *cartonniers* in the full-scale plan.

#### Patron and Documentation

While it is clear from documents that the "square" *Passion* was designed by van Orley and woven by Pieter de Pannemaker for Margaret of Austria, the original patron of the Alba *Passion*

has not been determined. Campbell, however, has made an intriguing suggestion that a four-piece set of the *Passion*, imported to England in 1528 by the Hanseatic merchant Edward Smytting to offer to Cardinal Wolsey or to King Henry VIII, may be one and the same with the Alba *Passion*.<sup>28</sup> This gold-woven *Passion*, acquired by Henry from Smytting in the course of 1528–29, is described in the latter's correspondence as: "the storye of Christe's mawndye," "the praying of hym in the gardeyn," "Jehsus bering the crosse," and "the hanging of our lorde on the crosse." Furthermore, as each of the panels in that set measured 27 square ells, they can be identified with documentation of "the riche historye of the passion" of the same dimensions recorded as having been at the Tower of London in the 1547 inventory of Henry VIII's possessions.

Campbell also hypothesizes that the four Alba *Passion* tapestries were among those that the Spanish ambassador Don Alonso de Cárdenas purchased from the collection of Henry VIII between 1649 and 1654: a description of four *Passion* panels whose measurements match those of the Smytting set appears on a list of items shipped by Cárdenas to Spain before August 1654 on behalf of Don Luis de Haro. De Haro also acquired Henry VIII's set of the *Acts of the Apostles*, which he left to the House of El Carpio in his will of 1658. From there the *Acts* passed to the House of Alba at some point between 1661 and 1839—probably when the two houses merged in 1733. If the *Passion* did follow the same route as the *Acts*, this would explain its location in the late nineteenth century, when all the panels of the *Passion* but the *Last Supper* were sold from the collection of the duke of Berwick and Alba in 1877, thus earning the name that the set carries today.

#### Weavers and Documentation

Pieter de Pannemaker can be presumed to be the weaver of the Alba *Passion* because he executed Margaret of Austria's "square" *Passion* tapestries, with which it shares two designs. Moreover, he wove the 1531 version of the *Last Supper* that was made for Charles V as an addition to the "square" *Passion*. The Alba tapestry borders do not carry the city mark of Brussels, a fact that has led to the assumption that the set was woven before 1528, when the use of this mark became obligatory. However, as

Delmarcel has noted, the lower selvages are renewed, thus leaving open to question whether the borders ever included the city mark.<sup>29</sup>

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1. For this interpretation of the documents as a correction of Farmer 1981, pp. 309–10, Ainsworth 1982, pp. 51–56, and Ainsworth 1990, pp. 48–51, see Delmarcel 1991, p. 121, and Delmarcel 1992, pp. 128–30.
2. See Sherman 1972, pp. 128–29.
3. "L'expression des acteurs, hommes et femmes, offraient en spectacle merveilleux: on eût dit une tapisserie vivante"; Jacquot 1960, p. 448. Woldbye 1964, p. 24.
4. See Marrow 1977, *passim*, esp. n. 10.
5. Von Simson 1953.
6. B. A. Gerrish in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* 1996, vol. 2, pp. 71–81.
7. Archives du Royaume, Brussels, Papiers d'État et de l'Audience, 1177/6; see also J. Duverger 1977. Perhaps also testifying to van Orley's Protestant beliefs is a drawing attributed to him, a *Satire on the Misuse of Power by the Roman Catholic Clergy* (Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam), which, while not specifically Lutheran, is highly critical of contemporary clergy. See Beets 1932; Boon 1978, pp. 133–34; and Farmer 1981, pp. 297–98.
8. See Cambridge 2000, pp. 34–41.
9. See E. Panofsky's discussion of this (1971, pp. 221–22).
10. Félibien 1685–88, vol. 1, p. 553; Sauval 1724, vol. 3, p. 10.
11. Farmer 1981, pp. 291–92, nn. 81–84; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 72–73; Farmer 1994, pp. 28–29.
12. Farmer 1994, p. 29.
13. See Held 1931.
14. Conway 1889, p. 102.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Delmarcel 1992, pp. 132–34. The extant preparatory sheets for the *Oblong Passion* indicate that Dürer made more studies for Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane than for any other subject in the series. See Cambridge 2000, vol. 1, pp. 40–41, vol. 2, nos. 83–86.
19. *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (Louvre; label on the painting reads "Deslahdres, 1976, R.F. 1976").
20. See Wegner 1973, pp. 22–23, no. 81, *Magdalena, kniend mit ausgestreckten Armen* (10943).
21. For example, in van Orley's *Crucifixion* in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and in the fragment of *Mourners beneath a Cross* in the collection of Sir William Worsley, Hovingham Hall, North Yorkshire.
22. Adelson in Vatican City 1984, pp. 278–80.
23. See Ainsworth 1990, pp. 56–57, and Viroli 1980, p. 82.
24. Standen 1985, p. 69. Dürer's *Last Supper* was one of five prints that he made in 1510 for a complete published edition in 1511 of a series that he began in 1497–98.
25. The Alba *Last Supper* and the version of the subject that was added to the "square" *Passion* in 1531 show differences in design that suggest that the former predated the latter. As noted by Paredes (in Brussels 2000, p. 80), the brocade hangings at the extreme right and left of the room in the Alba panel are replaced with grotesques of a later style in the scene



in the “square” *Passion*. In addition, more elaborate Italian Renaissance details, such as the decorative gold basin, pitcher, and vessel in the foreground, appear in the “square” *Passion* example, while the putti at the top of the columns behind Christ and the inscribed medallion of the Alba *Last Supper* have disappeared.

26. Raphael’s drawing in Windsor Castle was produced as an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 14, p. 33, no. 26); Giovanni Pietro da Birago made his engraving after Leonardo’s fresco shortly after it was completed (Bartsch 1854–76, vol. 13, p. 83, no. 28).

27. Van Orley incorporated this monumental crouching figure in a painting as well. For further references concerning the painting, see Hartleb 1998, pp. 8–11, no. 1.  
28. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 93, 190–92.  
29. Delmarcel 1992, p. 152.

35.

## Surrender of King Francis I

Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1526–28  
Pen and wash on paper, in two pieces with three pieces added  
39.5 x 75.4 cm (15½ x 29¾ in.)  
Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris (20.166)

PROVENANCE: Everard Jabach collection, no. 48, as by Pieter Coecke van Aelst; March 29, 1671, purchased from Jabach for the French royal collection; 1793, passed to the French State.

REFERENCES: Wauters 1893, as no. 5 in the series, pp. 71–72; Wauters 1902, as no. 7 in the series; Pais 1904, as no. 5 in the series; Alfassa 1920, p. 237; d’Hulst 1960, pp. 147–56, as no. 7 in the series; Lugt 1968, p. 59, no. 197, pl. 94 (with bibliog.).

d’Avalos, marquis of Pescara; 1571, listed in the inventory of Francesco Ferdinando d’Avalos; beginning of the 18th century, sold to the Grassi family; 1774, sold to Daniel I Delfino, patrician of Venice; before 1815, purchased by Tommaso d’Avalos and exhibited at the Palazzo Davalos, Naples; 1862, bequeathed by Alfonso d’Avalos of Pescara, marquis of Vasto, to the Naples museum. Conserved in France in 1998–99.

REFERENCES: Wauters 1878, pp. 95–98; Müntz 1878–85, p. 37; Pinchart 1878–85, p. 121; Guiffrey 1886, pp. 187–88; Beltrami 1896; Morelli 1899; Guiffrey 1911, pp. 146–48; Gagliardi 1916; Göbel 1923, pp. 102, 415, 416; Hunter 1925, pp. 127–29; S. Steinberg 1935; Crick-Kuntziger 1943; Dhanens 1953; d’Hulst 1960, pp. 147–56, as no. 3 in the series; Heinz 1963, pp. 188–89; Brassat 1992, pp. 169–70; Casali, Fraccaro, and Prina 1993; Naples 1994, pp. 190–97; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 98–99, 101; Paris 1999; Forti Grazzini 2000b; Spinosa and Guadalupi 2000.

France itself now lay leaderless and at the mercy of the emperor. The battle is represented in no fewer than seven surviving paintings, in four woodcuts, and in a drawing by Wolf Huber (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich).<sup>1</sup> Most of these visual records are bird’s-eye views, combining many episodes of the battle into one image, and none is as accurate or as detailed as the seven *Pavia* tapestries. Charles V’s previous tapestry commissions, such as the *Honors* (see cat. no. 17), had been symbolic in nature, dynastic allegories of kingship or governance, but the *Battle of Pavia* is the first to show a contemporary event in the life of the emperor.

### Description of the Set

The battle of Pavia is very well documented in published accounts, almost all of which were written by German soldiers in the imperial army. Two participants, Georg von Frundsberg, the leader of the German lansquenets, and Caspar Wintzerer wrote detailed descriptions of the battle.<sup>2</sup> The individual subjects of the seven tapestries can be recognized from these accounts, although the exact order of the series is not absolutely certain. The French army was encamped within the walled park of Montecello, besieging the imperial city of Pavia, which was under the command of Antonio de Leya. Under cover of darkness, the relieving imperial forces broke through the wall of the park and attacked the surprised French army from the rear. The action in the tapestries unfolds from left to right, bounded by the wall of the park, as the imperial army drives the French into the river Ticino. The various episodes take place in different parts of the

36.

## Invasion of the French Camp and the Flight of the Women and Civilians

From a seven-piece set of the *Battle of Pavia*  
Design by Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1526–28  
Woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, ca. 1528–31  
Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
440 x 818 cm (14 ft. 5¾ in. x 26 ft. 10 in.)  
7 warps per cm  
Museo e Gallerie Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples (I.G.M.N. 144486)

PROVENANCE: March 1531, presented to Emperor Charles V by the States General at the Brussels royal palace; August 1549, on display at the castle of Binche; February 1556, on display at the Brussels royal palace; 1556, taken to Spain by Mary of Hungary; 1558, bequeathed by Mary of Hungary to Don Carlos; 1568–71, bequeathed by Don Carlos to Francesco Ferdinando

The *Battle of Pavia* is one of the most important sets of tapestries that belonged to Emperor Charles V. The seven tapestries commemorate the great victory of the imperial forces over the French army under the command of King Francis I at Pavia, in Lombardy, on February 24, 1525, which also happened to be Charles V’s twenty-fifth birthday. The emperor was then in Spain, and his troops at Pavia were led by Charles de Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, with the assistance of Fernando Francesco d’Avalos, marquis of Pescara, and Charles de Bourbon, constable of France. All three imperial commanders appear, accurately portrayed, in several of the tapestries, along with the defeated French king, who was captured on the battlefield and taken as a prisoner to Madrid, only to be released in 1526 after signing the Treaty of Madrid. The imperial victory at Pavia marked the end of Francis’s ambitions in Italy, while



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battlefield, but their order is broadly chronological; four tapestries show the action up to the capture of Francis I, the turning point of the battle. The remaining three record the flight and destruction of the French army. The order of the tapestries can be reconstructed as follows: 1. *Advance of the Imperial Army and Counter-attack of the French Cavalry Led by Francis I*; 2. *Imperial Attack on the French Cavalry Led by the Marquis of Pescara and on the French Artillery by the Lansquenets under Georg von Frundsberg*; 3. *Advance of the Imperial Baggage Train and the Desertion of the Swiss Pikemen in the French Army*; 4. *Surrender of King Francis I* (fig. 147 and cat. no. 35); 5. *Invasion of the French Camp and the Flight of the Women and Civilians* (cat. no. 36); 6. *Flight of the French Army and Retreat of the French Rear Guard under the Duke of Alençon*; 7. *Sortie of the Besieged Imperial Troops and Rout of the Swiss Guard*.

Only three tapestries in the set have retained their original borders; they are the second, the sixth, and the seventh. The surviving borders, comprising garlands of fruit and flowers, correspond in style to those on the top and side borders of the contemporaneous *Hunts of Maximilian* (see cat. nos. 39, 40).

Originally the resemblance was even greater as evidenced by a description of the tapestries written when they were exhibited in Venice in 1776 (see below). This states that the upper and side borders depicted flowers and fruit but that the lower borders showed tritons and sea-horses, exactly as in the *Hunts of Maximilian*.<sup>3</sup> Sometime after this date, these lower borders were removed and replaced with the present flower and fruit sections, which appear to have been taken from the other tapestries that now lack their original borders.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Description of the Drawing*

The preparatory drawing for the *Surrender of King Francis I* (cat. no. 35) illustrates the key episode in the battle and closely anticipates the structure and appearance of the tapestry (fig. 147). The strongly centralized composition, with the three horsemen looking directly out of the scene, is unique within the series, indicating that it was probably the centerpiece of the whole set. Many of the figures are portraits and some can be identified from the woven inscriptions on the tapestry itself. To the left, King Francis I is helped from his dying horse by Count Nicolas von Salm, com-

mander of the German cavalry. He is assisted by La Motte de Noyers, captain of the Bourbon cavalry, who fought on the imperial side, and the count of Monmartin. Farther to the left, under the imperial banner (the double-headed Habsburg eagle and Charles's personal device of the double pillar and motto *Ne Plus Ultra*), the imperial commander Charles de Lannoy climbs from his horse. To the right is the arrival of the imperial cavalry, led by Charles de Bourbon and the marquis of Vasto, again identifiable from the inscriptions in the tapestry. The central bearded figure has been variously identified but is probably again Charles de Bourbon. Formerly a famous commander in the French army, Bourbon had joined the imperial side and was present at Francis's capture. The raised swords denote victory and are mentioned in contemporary accounts, as is Charles de Bourbon's honorable and deferential treatment of Francis I. An imperial soldier triumphantly raises Francis's own rapier, one of a number of emblematic items in the scene. Others, scattered on the ground, are the harquebus that killed Francis's horse, the horse's head plate, and the scabbard of Francis's rapier. The depiction of Francis's





Fig. 147. *Surrender of King Francis I* (detail) from the *Battle of Pavia*. Tapestry designed by Bernaert van Orley, woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, ca. 1528–31. Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 435 x 880 cm. Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples

armor in the tapestry follows an eyewitness account given in the diary of the historian Marino Sanuto: gold spurs, a brocade of gold cloth with white silk crosses over his armor, and a crucifix with a piece of the True Cross.<sup>5</sup> Comparison of the drawing with the tapestry makes it apparent that many of these details were added at a later stage. In the tapestry the figures are much more clearly individualized, with the addition of further costume details such as the fleurs-de-lis on the caparison of Francis's horse.

#### *Description of the Tapestry*

The tapestry of the *Invasion of the French Camp and the Flight of the Women and Civilians* takes its subject from the later stages of the battle. From the left the imperial cavalry and German pikemen attack the rear of the besieging French troops, and a French horseman, identifiable by his white Saint George's cross, is killed. The French are deployed in two trenches, protected by their artillery behind wicker-clad emplacements. The artillery to the left guards their rear, while the other cannons are directed against the walls of Pavia. The imperial cavalry has already invaded the camp and broken through

this second line, pursuing the French, who flee onto open ground. The drawbridge is down, allowing the imperial troops, identifiable by their white sashes, to enter the camp. Within the camp the scene is confused as huge explosions among the campaign tents drive mules and soldiers in various directions. One golden tent in the center, decorated with the fleur-de-lis, the emblem of the French king, may represent Francis's campaign tent. However, it does not look like the tent of Francis I, captured by the marquis of Pescara at the battle and given to King Alfonso XII of Spain in 1881 by Francesco d'Avalos of Pescara, which is now in the Real Armería, Madrid. The building to the upper left is the castle of Mirabello; it closely resembles the castle in Jörg Breu the elder's 1525 woodcut *The Battle of Pavia*. The stream that runs through the park is the Vernavola.

In the foreground, treated in a more genre-like manner, is the flight of the French baggage train. Some of the soldiers and women—among them a beautiful young woman carrying a fluffy dog—escape in confusion through the broken wall and move to the left. The muleteer tries to restrain a mule that bolts to the right, and other people flee in this direction. In the center are

two richly dressed women on mules, moving in opposite directions, while on a third mule, laden with heavy chests, is perched a parrot. A number of these figures correspond in terms of appearance and action to those in the imperial baggage train in the third tapestry, in what seems to be a deliberate parallel.

#### *Patron and Date*

The *Battle of Pavia* set can be traced to March 1531, when it was presented to the emperor by the States General in the Brussels royal palace. At this meeting, Mary of Hungary, Charles's younger sister, was enthroned as regent of the Netherlands on his behalf and in succession to his aunt Margaret of Austria, who had died in 1530. From this date onward, the set is closely linked with Mary of Hungary and perhaps was entrusted to her. According to resolutions of the States of Brabant, the emperor was given "certain tapestries made in Brussels of the battle of Pavia." The States added to this document a touching plea: they hoped the subject of the tapestries would be more acceptable to the emperor than those of their previous gifts, which he had given away.<sup>6</sup>

The *Battle of Pavia* is among the best-documented sets that belonged to Emperor













Detail of cat. no. 36

Charles V, but surprisingly, neither it nor the *Hunts of Maximilian* appear in the 1544 inventory made in Brussels of Charles's tapestry collection.<sup>7</sup> This inventory was occasioned by the death of the emperor's court tapissier, Gilleson van Warengien, whereupon the tapestries passed into the custody of the new tapissier, Jehannin Nicolay. In August 1549 a set of the *Battle of Pavia* was on display at Mary of Hungary's country residence, the castle of Binche, for the visit of the emperor, his sister Queen Eleanor of France, and Crown Prince Philip. According to the descriptions given by Vicente Alvarez and Calvete de Estrella, who were

both present at the festivities, the apartments of Prince Philip on the ground floor of the palace were decorated with the *Battle of Pavia*.<sup>8</sup> The tapestries were hung in two rooms: a large antechamber that served as the prince's dining room and a smaller bedchamber. A door connected these rooms to the chapel containing Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross* (Prado, Madrid), which somewhat later entered Philip's own collection. The castle of Binche was destroyed by the French in July 1554, but the tapestries had been removed before this date.

The set was again on display in February 1556, this time in the "grande salle" of the Brussels

royal palace when Admiral Gaspard de Coligny signed the Truce of Vaucelles on behalf of King Henry II of France.<sup>9</sup> The admiral objected to the tapestry, which showed the humiliating defeat of an earlier French sovereign, as an inappropriate choice on the occasion of a truce agreement with France. When Mary of Hungary returned from the Netherlands to Spain in 1556, she certainly possessed a set of the *Battle of Pavia*, which she took with her. According to a July 1556 quittance of her "ayde de la tapisserie" Denys de Cauenbergne, he was paid for the "refaire et racontrer" (repair) of two pieces from the *Battle of Pavia* and





Detail of cat. no. 36

one from the *Seven Deadly Sins* at Mary of Hungary's castle of Turnhout before they were shipped to Spain with her other tapestries.<sup>10</sup> The *Battle of Pavia*, however, is not listed among the tapestries in the inventory of her goods made after her death in October 1558.<sup>11</sup> Her extensive tapestry collection, comprising more than twenty figurative sets, was bequeathed to her niece Joanna of Austria, princess of Portugal. After Joanna's death in 1573, her tapestries went to King Philip of Spain. Many of Mary of Hungary's tapestries reappear in the 1598 inventory of Philip's tapestry collection, but not the *Battle of Pavia*.<sup>12</sup> This is because in her will Mary had

left the set to Don Carlos, only son of Philip II. This is stated expressly in the inventory of Don Carlos's tapestry collection, which covers the period from 1553 to 1573 and was compiled by his tapissier Diego de Vargas. Vargas's document reads in part: "Charged to the inventory seven pieces of gold and silk of the Battle of Pavia which Queen Dona Maria of Hungary sent to the Prince in her will and the aforesaid Diego de Vargas received in the city of Valladolid."<sup>13</sup>

Don Carlos was only about thirteen years old when he was given the *Battle of Pavia*, but he already had a court tapissier—Diego de Vargas—and at his early death in 1568, there were some

seventy-six tapestries in his collection. Twenty-one of this group were *lampazos* (foliage) and *verduras* (verdures), with the remaining fifty-five in six figurative sets. According to Don Carlos's will, drawn up in 1564, the *Battle of Pavia* was to be left to his tutor Honorato Juan, bishop of Osma.<sup>14</sup> However, the bishop died before Don Carlos, in 1566.<sup>15</sup> Instead, according to a list of items drawn up about 1573, the seven tapestries of the *Battle of Pavia* were left to Francesco Ferdinando d'Avalos, marquis of Pescara, the direct descendant of Fernando Francesco d'Avalos, an imperial commander at the battle, who died from his wounds in 1525 and is depicted in the

second panel leading the cavalry attack on the French.<sup>16</sup> The set is listed in the inventory of Francesco Ferdinando d'Avalos made at his death in 1571.<sup>17</sup> The tapestries remained in the d'Avalos collection until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when they were sold to the Grassi family, and in 1774 they came into the possession of Daniel I Delfino, patrician of Venice, who exhibited them in his palace along with an explanatory inscription.<sup>18</sup> Repurchased by the d'Avalos family in the person of Tommaso d'Avalos sometime before 1815, they were in the Palazzo Davalos in Naples.<sup>19</sup> This is the same set that was given to the Naples museum in 1862 by Alfonso d'Avalos of Pescara. Thus the tapestries of the *Battle of Pavia* now in Naples originally belonged to Mary of Hungary. Whether or not this is the same set that was given to the emperor in 1531 cannot be certainly stated, but it appears likely, given the number of times the set was displayed in the Netherlands and its absence from Charles V's inventory of 1544, which was made in Brussels. A curious feature of the set is that it was presented as a gift at least twice during its early history: once by the States General to the emperor and a second time by Don Carlos to the marquis of Pescara. That Don Carlos gave away a tapestry of such personal significance for the Spanish royal family is surprising. Perhaps there was another set in the Spanish royal collection, but there does not appear to be any mention of one in the surviving documents.

#### Artist

The tapestries were designed by Bernaert van Orley, court painter to Margaret of Austria and later to Mary of Hungary. All seven large-scale

preparatory drawings that van Orley made for the series have survived (Louvre, Paris; see cat. no. 35). The drawings are mainly executed in brushpoint and a blue or gray wash, though some show more detailed work in pen and ink. They are principally compositional sketches and are followed quite exactly in the finished tapestries. As is customary with tapestry, the specific details of costume, accessories, and landscape were added at the later full-scale cartoon stage.

#### Workshop and Place of Manufacture

The tapestries were woven in Brussels, probably by the workshop of Willem and Jan Dermoyen. There is a weaver's mark on the second tapestry, the *Imperial Attack on the French Cavalry Led by the Marquis of Pescara and on the French Artillery by the Lansquenets under Georg von Frundsberg*, which was formerly thought to be that of Jan Ghieteels but has now been convincingly identified as that of the Dermoyen workshop.<sup>20</sup> The same weaver's mark appears on another set linked to the emperor, the *Hunts of Maximilian* (Louvre, Paris; see cat. nos. 39, 40). As the ordinance mandating the inclusion of the weaver's mark on Brussels tapestries dates to May 1528, the set must have been woven about 1528 to 1531. In a document of 1533 Willem Dermoyen agreed to supply the merchants Jan van der Walle and Jakob Rehlinger with sets of the *Battle of Pavia* and the *Hunts of Maximilian*, which were to be offered for sale to the sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.<sup>21</sup> As this document is dated two years after the Pavia tapestries were given to Charles V, it clearly refers to a duplicate Pavia set woven by Dermoyen from the original cartoons.

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1. For a list of pictures of the battle, see Taylor 1983, pp. 318–26.
2. Von Frundsberg 1525; Wintzerer 1525.
3. See *Notizia degli arazzi* 1776. Forti Grazzini (2000b) has argued that there were two sets of the *Battle of Pavia*, one with the triton borders, which has been lost, the other with the flower borders, which is now in Naples. However, the documentation shows that the set described in Venice with the triton borders was identical to that owned by Francesco Ferdinando d'Avalos and came from Don Carlos's collection. The borders of the Naples set are clearly composite, and there are no grounds for supposing the existence of a second set on the basis of this evidence.
4. For discussion of the composite nature of the lower borders, see Lion in Paris 1999, p. 100.
5. Sanuto 1893, pp. 39–42.
6. Gachard 1839, pp. 33–34.
7. The 1544 inventory is in Mechelen 2000, p. 168, doc. 5.
8. Alvarez 1964, pp. 90–97; Calvete de Estrella 1873–84, vol. 3, pp. 81–92.
9. Wauters 1878, p. 95; Pinchart 1878–85, p. 121.
10. Archivo General de Simancas, Casa y Sitios Reales, leg. 377; Steppe 1981c, p. 85.
11. Beer 1891, pp. CLVIII–CLXIV, no. 8436.
12. Delmarcel 1999b.
13. "Cargan sele mas siete paños de oro y seda de la toma de Pavia q. la reina Dona Maria de Ungria mando al dho. Principe en su testamento y el dho. Diego de Vargas recivio q. la villa de Vallid"; Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, leg. 1108. See Buchanan forthcoming.
14. Gachard 1863, vol. 2, p. 134.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
16. "Al Marques de Pescara los siete panos de oro y seda de la toma de Pavia y siete sabanas"; Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, leg. 1108.
17. Bernini 1996, p. 440.
18. *Notizia degli arazzi* 1776. Forti Grazzini 2000b gives full documentation on the ownership of the set by the Grassi and publishes documents that show that the set was offered in 1774 to the Austrian court of Milan, which declined to purchase it.
19. Romanelli 1815, pp. 106–7.
20. See Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 41–43.
21. For the document, see *ibid.*, p. 45, n. 2.



37.

## Departure for the Hunt

Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1528–31

Ink and watercolor on paper

39 x 59.2 cm (15½ x 23¼ in.)

Inscribed (upper left, in the sky) *La court de bruxelles quant on voir par derriere dedans le parck* (The court of Brussels when one looks from behind in the park)

Prentenkabinet Universiteit Leiden (PK 2047)

PROVENANCE: Before 1741, collection of Pierre Crozat, Paris; 1741, sold to Pierre-Jean Mariette (along with six other hunting scenes by van Orley) in a sale held April 10–May 13, as no. 799, for 20 livres; before 1900, collection of the Prentenkabinet Universiteit Leiden.

REFERENCES: Wauters 1893, pp. 76–92; Friedländer 1909, p. 162; Veth and Muller 1918, vol. 2, p. 100; Migeon 1919; Alfassa 1920; Beets 1931; Crick-Kuntziger 1943, p. 89; d'Hulst 1960, pp. 171–82; Lugt 1968, pp. 52–57; Farmer 1981, pp. 287–93; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 80–87; Schneebalg-Perelman 1982, pp. 164–70; Delmarcel 1984; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 54–71 (with bibliog.); Farmer 1994, pp. 37–39.

38.

## Departure for the Hunt

Workshop of Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1528–31

Brown ink and blue wash on paper

40 x 57 cm (15½ x 22½ in.)

Inscribed (top left) xxv

Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris (20.160)

PROVENANCE: Everard Jabach collection, no. 43, as by Pieter Vantelet; 1671, acquired for the French royal collection.

REFERENCES: Wauters 1893, pp. 77, 84–86; Michel 1906, p. 44; Friedländer 1909, p. 162; Veth and Muller 1918, vol. 2, p. 100; Migeon 1919; Alfassa 1920, pp. 132, 135; Beets 1931, pp. 156–59; d'Hulst 1960, p. 171; Lugt 1968, pp. 53–54; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, esp. pp. 54–71.

39.

## Departure for the Hunt (Month of March)

From a twelve-piece set of the *Hunts of Maximilian*

Design by Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1528–31

Woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, 1531–33

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
440 x 750 cm (14 ft. 5¼ in. x 24 ft. 7¼ in.)

7–8 warps per cm

City mark of Brussels (bottom of left selvage); manufacturer's monogram of the Dermoyen workshop (bottom of right selvage)

Département des Objets d'Art, Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA 7314)

40.

## The Killing of the Wild Boar (Month of December)

From a twelve-piece set of the *Hunts of Maximilian*

Designed by Bernaert van Orley, ca. 1528–31

Woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, 1531–33

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
440 x 605 cm (14 ft. 5¼ in. x 19 ft. 10¼ in.)

7–8 warps per cm

No city mark; manufacturer's mark of the Dermoyen workshop (lower right selvage)

Département des Objets d'Art, Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA 7323)

PROVENANCE OF THE TAPESTRIES: 1589, listed in the inventory of Henri of Lorraine, duke of Guise; 1588, acquired by inheritance by Charles of Lorraine; 1655, acquired by Cardinal Mazarin and entrusted to the care of Colbert; 1665, purchased by Louis XIV and recorded in an inventory of the Mobilier de la Couronne at the Hôtel de Petit Bourbon, Paris; before 1678, exhibited at Versailles, then moved to furniture storage at the Place de la Concorde; 1797, moved to the Musée Centrale des Arts, then exhibited in August in the Grand Salon of the Louvre; 1914, removed to Toulouse for safekeeping; 1918, returned to the Louvre; 1939, removed to Chambord, again for safekeeping, then returned to the Louvre.

REFERENCES: Van Mander 1604, fol. 211; Félibien 1666 (*Entretien* IV); Sauval 1724, vol. 3, p. 10; Alfassa 1920; Beets 1931; J. Duverger and E. Duverger 1981; Ainsworth 1982; Schneebalg-Perelman 1982; Delmarcel 1984; Necipoğlu 1989; Delmarcel 1991; Balis et al. 1993; Forti Grazzini 2000b.

The so-called *Hunts of Maximilian* comprises a set of twelve huge tapestries devoted to hunting scenes, namely the falcon hunt and the hunts of deer and wild boar. The settings are located in the Soignes forest, the imperial hunting ground near Brussels. Several of the portraits of hunters, as well as their emblems, refer to members of the imperial entourage around Charles V. Moreover, each tapestry is placed under a sign of the zodiac, shown in the upper border. The set is therefore a series of the Twelve Months of the Year, as well as of the hunt.

Together with the *Honors* (see cat. no. 17), this set is one of the most important and, at the same time, one of the most mysterious in the history of Netherlandish Renaissance tapestry. The circumstances in which the *Hunts* series was conceived remain uncertain, as no documentation has yet come to light. Current research suggests that the series was ordered between 1528 and 1533 by the Habsburg court in Brussels—perhaps by Mary of Hungary, sister of the emperor Charles V and regent of the Netherlands from 1531. Two sets of preparatory drawings are preserved. They are attributed to Bernaert van Orley, the leading tapestry designer of his generation, and to his workshop. The preparatory sketches were enlarged into lifesize cartoons (now lost) and woven into tapestries, which bear the city mark of Brussels as well as a monogram of the manufacturer. The set entered the collection of Louis XIV in 1665, where it joined several other very prestigious Netherlandish tapestries. All of these sets containing gold and silver were burned in June 1797 at the order of the Directory to recover the precious metal, but for unknown reasons, the *Hunts of Maximilian* escaped this fate.

### Description and Iconography

Both sets of drawings are thought to be preparatory sketches for the tapestries: for the *Month of March*, the Leiden sheet (cat. no. 37) is now considered to be a working sketch from the hand of van Orley himself, while that in Paris (cat. no. 38) is thought to be a fair copy made in the van Orley workshop and later reworked. The drawings prefigure the composition of the tapestry



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(cat. no. 39) in most of the details, except that the right part of the weaving extends farther beyond the tree and includes another man on horseback and a valet with a hunting dog. The faces of the riders in the foreground are more worked out and individualized in the tapestry, which suggests that they are portraits. Some authors consider the central, isolated cavalier on his rearing horse, with his beautiful red garment, to be Charles V himself, but comparison with known profiles of Charles leaves this open to question. It is possible that the reweaving of this figure, undertaken as part of a restoration campaign at the Gobelins workshops, completed in 1914, may also have obscured this identification. Whatever the case, this horseman, the one coming up from the left, and the

two conferring at the right are undoubtedly members of the imperial court, richly clad and awaiting the start of the hunt.

The main focus of both the drawings and the tapestry is the splendid view of Brussels in the background. At the far right, the twin towers of the church of Saint Gudule are visible on a hill, while the city itself is shown in the center, behind its medieval walls. Specific details include the tower of the church of Saint Nicholas and, to its left, the much taller spire of the town hall. While these monuments still exist today, the impressive Coudenberg Palace of the dukes of Brabant, represented at the far left, was destroyed in a fire in 1731. The buildings in the foreground were erected in 1430–36, and the great central hall behind, the “grande salle,”

was built in 1451–61 during the reign of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy. Part of the chapel appears at the right: the building itself was begun in 1522, and its temporary straw roof was laid in 1528. This imposing building was enlarged between 1533 and 1537, with new apartments and a gallery above, in emulation of that at Fontainebleau (erected in 1528). These later elements were added in ink in the Louvre drawing, but they are not represented in the Leiden drawing or in the tapestry. In conclusion, the Leiden sketch and the weaving of the tapestry can be firmly dated between 1528 (temporary roof of the chapel) and 1533, before the additions to the chapel were made under Mary of Hungary.

A medallion at the upper border of the tapestry *Departure for the Hunt (Month of March)*





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contains the zodiacal sign Aries, or the Ram, whose period of lunar influence begins in mid-March. This panel is therefore assumed to be the first of the twelve tapestries, because until 1575, the new year began in March, according to the Julian calendar. The tapestry is surrounded, as are the eleven others, by sumptuous borders filled with flowers, fruits, birds, and precious objects of goldsmith's work. The lower border includes a battle of sea-gods rendered in brown, in imitation of bronze relief sculpture. The formal model for the lower frieze must have been provided by Italian engravings, as van Orley himself never went to Italy.<sup>1</sup> At first sight, this theme is not connected to the general iconography of the *Hunts*, but the likely explanation is provided by *February*

(fig. 141), the last scene in the set, where the entire sequence is placed under the protection of Diana. (Diana appears as a statue presiding over an allegorical scene in which huntsmen and their dogs pay homage to King Modus and Queen Ratio, who embody the "practice" and "theory" of hunting.) Besides her role as goddess of the hunt, Diana was also identified with Luna, the Moon, who reigns over the waters, as the phases of the moon determine the ocean's tides.

The *Killing of the Wild Boar* (Month of December) (cat. no. 40) takes place under the sign of Capricorn, or the Goat, and therefore represents December. It depicts a hunter on horseback about to spear an enormous wild boar. The animal is being attacked by three great hunting

dogs (one in armor) and two small ones, while another lies wounded or dead on the ground. Behind this foreground scene, on the left, two other hunters are running to assist the horseman with wooden boar-spears in hand; a third valet is visible behind the tree in the center of the composition. In the background, several valets and hunters pursue another wild boar, while other participants blow their hunting horns. The chapel and houses in the distance, on the right, have been identified as belonging to the village of Terhulpen (La Hulpe), north of Brussels, which is still located on the border of what remains of the Soignes forest. As it is December, the tall trees have lost their leaves, and on the branches of the central tree, its trunk covered with ivy, several birds (including









a woodpecker) and a squirrel witness the cruel scene on the ground below.

The hunter on horseback, clothed in a rich, red embroidered garment, his legs protected by steel greaves, has a very specific profile, suggesting that the image is a portrait. Since 1644, when an inventory was made after the death of Charles of Lorraine, fourth duke of Guise (1571–1640), he has been identified with the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. This emperor died in 1519, however, and the set cannot have been designed before 1528. In fact, the hunter is almost certainly a portrait of Ferdinand of Habsburg, brother of Charles V, who was elected king of the Romans (thus future emperor of the Holy Roman Empire) in 1531. Ferdinand's profile was indeed very similar to that of his grandfather Maximilian. It has been noted that Ferdinand, like his sister Mary of Hungary, was a passionate hunter, and during the stay of the imperial family in Brussels in 1531—a pivotal year for this set—many hunting parties in the Soignes forest are recorded.

The imperial character of this scene, and of the entire series, is further emphasized by the heraldry on the richly embroidered collars worn here by the dogs. The injured or dead animal on the ground has a collar with the pillars of Hercules, the personal emblem of the emperor Charles V, and the firesteels and flints of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Collars on dogs in other panels in the set show the double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire.

#### *Design and Designer*

The sketches and models for this series have been attributed to Bernaert van Orley since Karel van Mander discussed them in his *Schilder-Boeck* (Book of Painters), which first appeared in 1604. Van Mander wrote that van Orley executed many tapestry cartoons for Margaret of Austria and for her nephew the emperor Charles V, including “for the Emperor many hunting scenes, located in the forests and villages around Brussels, where the Emperor and other princes and princesses were portrayed from life, and which were woven into very precious tapestries.”<sup>2</sup> Stylistic analysis has confirmed this attribution, especially with regard to the first set of drawings, which appear to be by the same hand as those for the *Foundation of Rome* series, signed by van Orley and dated 1524 (now in Munich; see figs. 138,









Detail of cat. no. 39

139).<sup>3</sup> The attitudes of many of the figures of hunters and valets are also similar to those in the *Story of Jacob* (1528–34, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels; see fig. 144), another tapestry set designed by van Orley (part of his name in Latin appears on the final tapestry). Two later French authors, Félibien (1666) and Sauval (1724), recorded that van Orley was assisted by a painter called Tons, who specialized in landscapes. He apparently provided the views of the Soignes forest and also, very probably, the design of flowers, plants, and birds on the borders.<sup>4</sup>

Quite exceptionally, two sets of preparatory drawings survive for this tapestry series.<sup>5</sup> The

first group of six drawings is now preserved in Leiden (*March and September*), Berlin (*June*), Washington (*August*), Budapest (*November*), and Copenhagen (*December*). In these, the design is very spontaneous, dynamic, and creative, and the sheets also include handwritten indications of the topography. These drawings are generally considered to represent the initial conception of the set by Bernaert van Orley himself. The second set, preserved at the Louvre, contains all twelve subjects. These sheets are contemporary with the set of six, but the draftsmanship is more elaborate and finished. They are considered to be copies made in the workshop of van Orley by his assistants. The now-lost cartoons must have been

made in reverse of the drawings, for the tapestries present the same main outlines as the drawings, with great fidelity, albeit with much greater detail in the rendition of trees, leaves, and animals. As is usual for such preparatory drawings, none of the *Hunts* includes either the borders, which were separately worked out, probably by Tons and his workshop, or the medallions with the zodiacal signs of the months.

#### *Patron and Date*

The tapestries themselves can be dated after May 1528, when the woven city mark became compulsory in Brussels. The Coudenberg Palace is represented in a state that can be dated after 1528,









when the chapel was covered with a temporary thatched roof, and before 1533, when Mary of Hungary ordered the construction of the chapel's gallery and new apartments. Several buildings depicted in the tapestries of the set, all located in the Soignes forest and belonging to the imperial hunting grounds, confirm this dating between 1528 and 1533.<sup>6</sup>

No contract has been preserved, but there are good reasons to believe that the weaving of the set was ordered for the imperial court in 1531. Emperor Charles V resided in Brussels for one year, starting that January; his brother Ferdinand was crowned king of the Romans at Aachen during the same month, and their sister Mary of Hungary joined them in Brussels in April and was appointed regent of the Netherlands in October.<sup>7</sup>

The further history of the set can be firmly traced only from 1589, when it is mentioned in the inventory of Henri of Lorraine, duke of Guise.<sup>8</sup> It remains unclear, however, how the set came into the possession of this French noble family. The tapestries reappeared later in the collection of Cardinal Mazarin and eventually, in 1665, entered the collection of Louis XIV, who owned many other very important Netherlandish sets.

#### Manufacturer

From May 1528 on, tapestries produced in Brussels that were larger than 6 square ells (2.81 sq. m) had to bear two marks woven into them: that of the city (two B's, one on each side of a red shield) and that of the "producer," the person who made the tapestry or ordered it to be made. This acted as a guarantee of both the material quality and the origin of the weaving. The first marks were designed in the form of monograms; the register of these "trademarks" was unfortunately lost in a fire in the seventeenth century.

The monogram that appears on various tapestries of the *Hunts of Maximilian* set is composed of the letters I, G, V, and W. It was long considered to be the mark of Jan Ghieteels, or Gheteels, a Brussels weaver who is traceable from 1527 until 1558 but whose production, documented by archives, cannot be connected with any existing sets.<sup>9</sup>

The present author is rather inclined to identify this mark as belonging to the associated merchants Dermoyen and van der Walle: Jan

and Willem (Guillaume) Dermoyen of Brussels (for the I and G) and their financial partner in Antwerp, Pieter van der Walle (for the V and W; the latter can also be read as an inverted M, referring to "der Moyen," an alternate spelling of the Brussels workshop).<sup>10</sup> The same mark appears on other extant sets that can be related to these entrepreneurs, namely on the *Labors of Hercules* (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, ser. 23), which was delivered to Mary of Hungary by Willem Dermoyen in 1535, and on the *Battle of Pavia*, which is now in Naples (see cat. no. 36). A document of June 15, 1533, mentions that rewavings of both the *Hunts of Maximilian* and the *Battle of Pavia* were offered for sale by the Dermoyens to Pieter van der Walle and Jakob Rehlinger, who intended to sell them to Süleyman the Magnificent, sultan of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup> This sale had to be pursued in cooperation with merchants in Venice, but the eventual outcome is not known. It is not impossible that these two sets remained unsold in Italy and were taken over by Italian customers. As recent research has demonstrated, the *Battle of Pavia* set in Mary of Hungary's collection (probably that presented to Charles V in 1531), originally had lower borders identical to those on the present *Hunts of Maximilian* depicting a marine battle of sea gods in bronze color (see p. 322). This correspondence may support the idea that the *Hunts* and *Pavia* sets were conceived as complementary ensembles, respectively metaphors of Peace (hunting) and War (battle).

As discussed above (see pp. 278–79, 280–82), it was not uncommon for important Brussels tapestry manufacturers, such as the Dermoyens, to work in partnership with Antwerp financiers, who provided capital and whose names thus appear either in the contracts or in the records of the final payments.<sup>12</sup> The Dermoyen brothers undoubtedly belonged to a small but influential group of tapestry manufacturers, including Pieter van Aelst and the Pannemakers, who provided the finest and most expensive sets to a clientele of high nobility and to the court itself. Besides the above-mentioned sets, they sold the now-lost *Genealogy of the House of Nassau*, also from designs by van Orley, to Henry III of Nassau in 1530–33; a re-edition of the *Acts of the Apostles* to Francis I of France (now lost); and the *Story of Joshua* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) to Mary of Hungary in 1544.

GUY DELMARCEL





Detail of cat. no. 40

1. Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 104–5.
2. “Hy maeckte onder ander voor den Keyser verscheyden Jachten met de Bosschen en plaetsen ontrent Brussel daer dese Jachten van den Keyser gheschieden: in welcke den Keyser en meer Princen en Princessen nae t’leven quamen t’welck seer costlijkh in tapijt wiert ghewrocht”; van Mander 1604, fol. 211.
3. Ainsworth 1982, pp. 80–87.
4. Félibien 1685–88, vol. 1, p. 553; Sauval 1724, vol. 3, p. 10;

Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 57, 73. The hypothesis of Schneeberg-Perelman 1982 attributing the drawings to a certain Frans Borreman in 1540–52, the cartoons to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, and a weaving to 1548–52 was rejected by Delmarcel 1984 and has not found any further support.

5. Ainsworth 1982, pp. 80–87; Balis in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 60–71; M. M. Grasselli in Washington 2000, pp. 148–49.

6. See Alfassa 1920 and De Jonge in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 80–101.
7. Balis in Balis et al. 1993, p. 122.
8. Schneeberg-Perelman 1982, pp. 292–93.
9. J. Duverger and E. Duverger 1981 (with bibliog.).
10. Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 41–43.
11. See Necipoğlu 1989 and Delmarcel 1991.
12. See Buchanan 1999.











## Italian Designs in Brussels, 1530-35

The restricted circumstances in which Pope Clement VII found himself in the years following the Sack of Rome limited his tapestry patronage to supporting the completion of projects that had been initiated before 1527. Nevertheless, the splendid sets with which he and his predecessor had equipped the Vatican during the 1510s and early 1520s evidently provided a remarkable example to other Italian patrons and to visitors to the papal court. And while the Sack of Rome accelerated the dispersal of Raphael's atelier that had begun with the departure of Tommaso Vincidor for Brussels in June 1520 and Giulio Romano for Mantua in 1524, it was through this very dispersal that Raphael's collaborators and pupils, now well schooled in the planning and execution of tapestry designs, were able to extend their experience and the memories of the Vatican tapestries, as they established themselves under new patrons. In the following years Giulio, Giovanni Francesco Penni, and Perino del Vaga were to conceive a number of remarkable new designs that would compound the initial influence of the earlier Raphael-school cartoons and *modelli* of the 1510s and early 1520s. Indeed, little time must have elapsed between the completion of the *Scuola nuova* set in Brussels and the arrival of the first of these new Italian projects.

### GIULIO ROMANO

Giulio Romano was one of the strongest artistic personalities to emerge from Raphael's workshop after the master's death. Celebrated by Vasari for the extraordinary dexterity and swiftness of his draftsmanship (*facilità*), the protean creativity of his imagination (*invenzione*), and his ability to infuse modern subjects with the resonance and grandeur of classical art, Giulio eminently displayed all these factors in the large numbers of drawings and other works of art that can be attributed to him. Apart from the commissions he continued to work on and completed for Clement VII, such as the Sala di Costantino and the Villa Madama—which he worked on with Penni and Giovanni da Udine, respectively—he received orders for a variety of projects from other patrons, among them the altarpiece commissioned by Jakob Fugger II (Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome) and the design for an urban palazzo for the Roman patrician Cristoforo Stati (Palazzo Stati

Maccarani). It was Giulio's abilities as an architect that appear to have been the main attraction for another patron, Federico II Gonzaga, fifth marquis and first duke of Mantua, who sought to persuade him to resettle in Mantua from 1522, a campaign that resulted in the artist's move there in autumn 1524. Giulio appears to have been involved in the design of extensions for the Marmiolo palace (destroyed) before that date, and the success of his relocation is reflected in a variety of ways: the steady stream of projects on which he was engaged in the following years, the intimate relationship that existed between artist and patron, and the privileges and positions with which he was rewarded. In 1526, he was made *capomaestro* for all the Gonzaga buildings in the Mantuan state and Superior of the Streets in Mantua, and in 1528 he was also granted the revenues of the state sawmill. Visiting Mantua in 1527, Cellini recorded that Giulio was "living like a lord."<sup>1</sup> Giulio's work for Federico encompassed a broad range of tasks, from producing designs for silver plate and decorative objects (one being a marble tomb for the duke's favorite dog) to executing paintings and frescoes and major architectural projects, of which the most important from 1527 was the design and decoration of his patron's suburban villa, the Palazzo Te, and its stables. This last project extended over the next ten years, growing in size and scale in proportion to Federico's increasing stature on the contemporary political scene. Although Giulio was well paid, the duke was clearly a hard taskmaster, and the artist's letters reveal the conditions in which he worked, a "harried impresario"—to use Hartt's description—laboring through illness and fevers to meet deadlines and keep his patron happy. Following Raphael's formula, Giulio accomplished his myriad projects by efficiently using a large workshop of assistants who executed paintings and frescoes from his *modelli*.<sup>2</sup>

### DEEDS AND TRIUMPHS OF SCIPIO

Giulio's experience with the Raphael-school tapestry designs and the esteem in which the tapestry medium was held by Federico Gonzaga and his brothers, Ercole and Ferrante, might lead us to suspect that the execution of tapestry designs was an important part of Giulio's duties in Mantua; however, there is little evidence to support the notion that this was so, at least during the 1520s and

early 1530s. Vasari notes that Giulio designed many tapestries for the duke of Ferrara, and we know that he provided drawings for sets of the *Gigantomachia* and *Hercules* to Ercole d'Este in the late 1530s and early 1540s, of which three workshop copies survive (see below, pp. 484–86).<sup>3</sup> But the earliest certain evidence of Giulio providing designs for Federico dates from 1539, when Federico established a tapestry manufactory in Mantua, whose first product was a set of *Puttini* tapestries woven from designs by the artist (see cat. nos. 57–59). Yet testimony that Giulio was involved in tapestry design for other clients from at least the late 1520s, and possibly earlier, is offered by one of the most influential series of the early 1530s, the twenty-two piece set of the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio*, of which the first edition was made between 1532 and 1535, not for Federico, or his patron, Charles V, but for Francis I, king of France.

The circumstances surrounding the conception of this project remain uncertain. The earliest reference to the set appears in the

French royal accounts under July 9, 1532, when “Francoys de Francoys” from Lucca was paid 400 *livres tournois* for having helped the king to establish a good contract for a tapestry (or a set of tapestries) of silk and gold which would represent the story of Scipio the African (the exact nature of Francoys’s intervention is unclear as the wording of the account is ambiguous).<sup>4</sup> Two days later, on July 11, a contract was issued from the king to Melchior Baldi, an agent representing the Brussels-based Venetian tapestry merchant Marc Crétif, whereby the latter was to complete provision of a gold and silk set of “l’histoire de Scipion l’Africain,” of which the king had already been shown three finished pieces, in a period of eighteen months. The full set was to have a surface area of 400 square French ells (approx. 566 sq. m) and was to cost 50 *écus d’or soleil* per ell.<sup>5</sup> The contract specified that the tapestries were to be delivered in batches of between two and four pieces, the king paying half the value of each batch on delivery and the



Fig. 149. *Victory of Constantine at the Milvian Bridge*. Frescoes in the Sala di Costantino, the Vatican, by Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni, 1521–23



Fig. 150. *The Capture of Carthage*. Preparatory drawing for the tapestry from the *Deeds of Scipio* by Giulio Romano, ca. 1522–23 (?). Pen and brown ink, brown wash, with white highlights on paper. Musée du Louvre, Paris



balance six months later. Accordingly, a preliminary payment of 2,881 *écus d'or soleil* was made for four tapestries that had already been made and which were delivered for the king's use on August 1.<sup>6</sup> These four pieces were displayed at the banquet Francis hosted for Henry VIII at Boulogne that October, when a contemporary witness noted that they depicted the "victoires" (that is, deeds) of Scipio.

A subsequent account, undated but among records of payments for late 1532 and early 1533, reveals that the Italian artist Francesco Primaticcio, who had arrived at Fontainebleau shortly after March 23, 1532,<sup>7</sup> was provided with 200 *écus d'or soleil* to travel from France to Flanders, "where he had to carry a *modello* of the story of Scipio the African, intended for a tapestry that the king was having made in Brussels, and to bring back the cartoon of the said story."<sup>8</sup> Later accounts demonstrate that the completed tapestries were delivered in four separate groups, on March 3, 1533, August 1, 1533, July 9, 1534, and April 12, 1535, and that the completed set comprised twenty-two pieces with a height of 4 French ells (4.76 m) and combined length of 120 ells (143 m), giving a total surface area of some 470 square ells (680 sq. m).<sup>9</sup> The total cost was 23,448 *écus d'or soleil*, approximately 50,000 *livres*, making it the most expensive work of art in the king's entire collection.<sup>10</sup> The speed with which the tapestries were made suggests that Crétif must have divided the cartoons among a number of different workshops. It has been suggested that the Dermoyen workshop may

have played a major part in the manufacturing of the set, as this establishment produced many of the other tapestries Crétif sold to Francis during the 1530s.<sup>11</sup> Another workshop that perhaps was involved was that of Balthazar van Vlierden, who sold a twelve-piece set of *Scipio* to the merchant Erasmus Schets (Schetz) in 1546.<sup>12</sup>

### Subject

Francis's set was destroyed by the Directory government in 1797, but its subjects and appearance can be reconstructed on the basis of inventory descriptions (particularly a detailed seventeenth-century account, now lost but transcribed by Reiset in 1866), preparatory sketches and *modelli*, and later weavings made from cartoons that, if not the originals, were evidently good copies (see fig. 154).<sup>13</sup> An original study of this material was published by d'Astier in 1907, and a monographic exhibition of it was mounted by Jestaz and Bacou in Paris in 1978.<sup>14</sup> (The titles used in that exhibition are adopted in this discussion.) As these studies have demonstrated, Francis's set comprised two discrete groups of designs, differing in precise subject and style but both dealing with Scipio Africanus (236–183 B.C.), a paragon of military and civil virtue and leadership.<sup>15</sup> The first group, the *Deeds*, made up of twelve pieces (not thirteen as has recently been claimed),<sup>16</sup> depicted Scipio's battles against Carthage in the African campaign (218–201 B.C.), as described by Livy in his discussion of the Second

Punic War (33, 34) and in part by the Greek historian Polybius, in a text that was published in many of the numerous late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century editions of Livy.<sup>17</sup> The second group, the *Triumphs*, made up of ten pieces, showed the triumphal entry of Scipio into Rome as related in Appian's *Roman History*.<sup>18</sup> All the tapestries from both groups were surrounded by a blue border decorated with acanthus leaves.

### Design

No contemporary documents refer to the designer of the *Scipio* tapestries; in fact, the earliest attribution, in records of the French royal collection, dates from the seventeenth century, when the officers responsible for Louis XIV's tapestries assigned the design to Giulio. At the same period Félibien gave related drawings in the Jabach collection to him as well.<sup>19</sup> But investigation of the extant sketches and *modelli* indicates that a slightly more complicated attribution may be in order. Five *modelli* for the *Deeds* survive in the Louvre, and critics have generally agreed on assigning these to the hand of Penni, leading Hartt and more recently Delmarcel to attribute the design of the entire group to that artist.<sup>20</sup> However, doubt is cast on this supposition by the evidence of five preliminary studies for the *Deeds*. Three of these, formerly in the Gatteaux collection, were destroyed in 1871, but they are known from photographs.<sup>21</sup> In his fundamental study of the series d'Astier accepted the traditional attribution of these lost drawings to Giulio. Moreover, in the catalogue of the monographic exhibition devoted to the series, Bacou affirmed this judgment, arguing that the lost studies appear to have been superior to the *modelli* of the same scenes given to Penni and that, as they were pricked for transfer, Giulio must have been responsible for the conception of all or most of the *Deeds*. This theory, which has been accepted by most subsequent critics,<sup>22</sup> is supported by the fact that a preparatory sheet with studies for the elephant heads in the *Battle of Zama* (fig. 152) also seems to be from Giulio's hand.<sup>23</sup> Two other preparatory sketches survive in the Louvre. Jaffé's attribution to Giulio of one, for the *Capture of Carthage* (fig. 150), has generally been accepted by later scholars.<sup>24</sup> The fifth preliminary sketch, for the *Conference of Scipio and Hannibal* (fig. 151), in which the composition is still in an early state of development, is clearly from Penni's hand (as is the more finished *modello*); but it is possible that Penni was not the author of even this concept, for Vasari attributes the design of the scene—as he knew it from an engraving—to Giulio.<sup>25</sup> Further support for ascribing the conception of the scheme to Giulio is provided by two engravings of the *Deeds*, of which one, the *Capture of Carthage*, was attributed to Giulio and signed and dated by Georg Pencz in 1539.<sup>26</sup> Evidently reproducing a drawing that was

available to Pencz during his visit to Italy in 1539, it demonstrates that that design was firmly considered to be by Giulio at the time. A second engraving, of the *Clemency of Scipio*, was made by Antonio Fantuzzi in 1542, a time when his work seems to have been devoted exclusively to reproducing designs by Giulio.<sup>27</sup> To summarize, these factors all suggest that Giulio conceived the series, at least in part, but that the *modelli* were elaborated by Penni.

### Date of Conception and Issues of Collaboration

Based on the evidence of a collaboration between Giulio and Penni, Jestaz and Bacou suggested that the series must have been conceived in Mantua during the brief period when the two artists, who had previously worked together in Rome, were reunited in 1528, before Penni's departure for and death in Naples,<sup>28</sup> but this conjecture is cast in some doubt by the sheet of studies for the elephant heads in the *Battle of Zama*. When this piece was published in 1989, Ferino Pagden argued that its drawing style is closely linked to that employed by Giulio during the early 1520s, in the period immediately following Raphael's death, which occurred in 1520. Furthermore, she noted the remarkable similarity of the compositions and figure style of the *Deeds of Scipio* and those of the frescoes Giulio and Penni created between 1521 and 1523 in the Sala di Costantino (fig. 149). She therefore dated the conception of the tapestry set to 1521–23, a dating that has been tentatively accepted by Lefébure and Forti Grazzini.<sup>29</sup> The use of red chalk—habitual for Giulio at this time—for the sketch of the elephant heads and the general approach to the conception of the *Deeds* certainly supports this theory. (It should also be mentioned here that if the conception is placed so early, the *modelli* by Penni may also have been made in the early 1520s.) This early dating would explain another curious issue, which has previously passed unnoticed: the apparent citation of the *Capture of Carthage* in a *modello* on the theme of Romulus and Remus that is signed by Bernaert van Orley and dated 1524 (fig. 139). If we accept Ferino Pagden's hypothesis, we can suppose that a copy of this design was available to van Orley in Brussels by this date, perhaps carried there by Vincidor from an undocumented return visit to Italy during the early 1520s.

Further support for an early dating is provided by the classical subject matter of the scheme and the interests of the Raphael school in such sources during the late 1510s and early 1520s. Pliny the Elder provides descriptions of wall paintings in ancient Rome depicting the defeat of the Carthaginians and other battles and victories.<sup>30</sup> Raphael and the artists in his workshop were fascinated by such classical precedents and applied them to their tapestry projects—as demonstrated by the *Grotesques of Leo X* and the



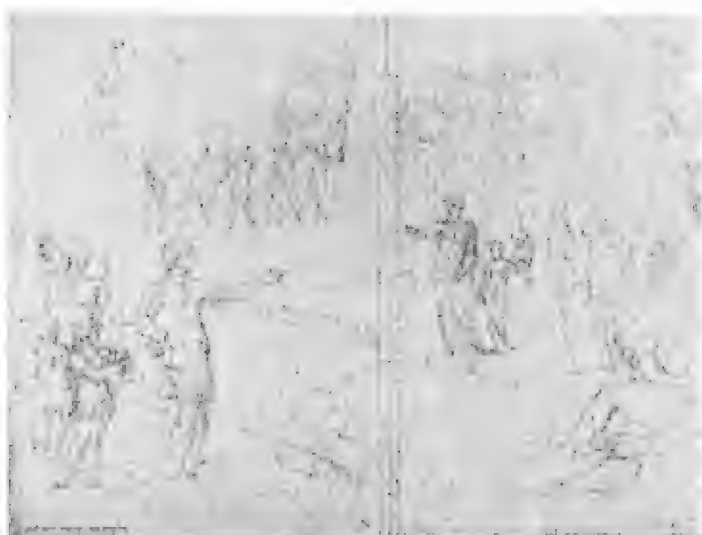


Fig. 151. *Conference of Scipio and Hannibal*. Preparatory drawing for the tapestry from the *Deeds of Scipio* by Giovanni Francesco Penni, ca. 1522–23 (?). Pen and brown ink, 38.9 x 51.7 cm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

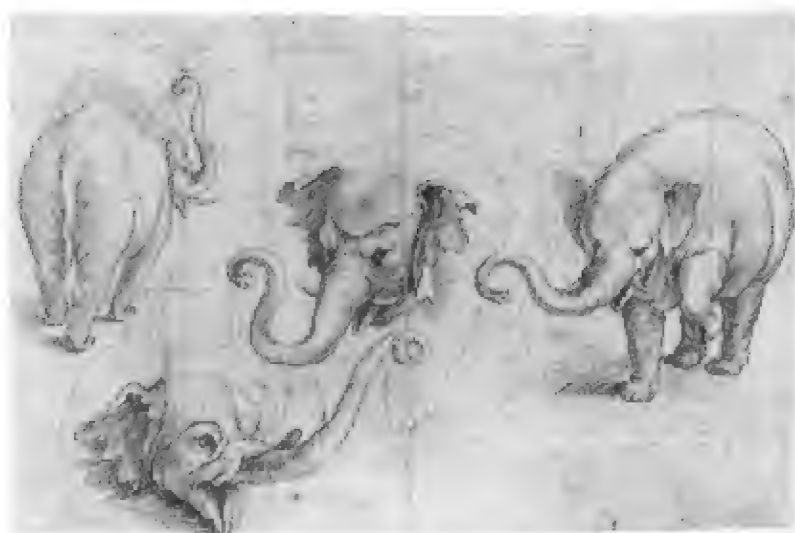


Fig. 152. *Four Elephant Heads*. Study for the *Battle of Zama* from the *Deeds of Scipio* by Giulio Romano, ca. 1522–23 (?). Red chalk on paper, 20.7 x 30.1 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



Fig. 153. *The Battle of Zama*. Workshop copy (?) of the *modello* for the tapestry from the *Deeds of Scipio* by Giovanni Francesco Penni after Giulio Romano, 1523–28 (?). Pen and brown ink, gray wash, and white heightening on paper, 41.9 x 56.7 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 154. *The Battle of Zama* from the *Deeds of Scipio*. Tapestry designed by Giulio Romano, probably woven in the workshop of Balthazar van Vlierden, Brussels, ca. 1544. Wool and silk, 480 x 902 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

*Giochi di putti* series (see above, pp. 225–33). In view of this, it seems plausible to suggest that the conception of an enormous series of the *Deeds of Scipio* might equally have been inspired by such a classical account. In the absence of further evidence the issue of the date of conception of the *Deeds* must remain in question. However, at this point it appears appropriate to qualify previous assumptions that the preparatory work for the series was undertaken in 1528 with the caveat that it may in fact have been begun five or six years earlier and that the scheme was somehow revived and developed in the late 1520s.

If the project was initially intended for a series of tapestries (which itself is not certain), it might be suggested that the experience of painting the fictive tapestries in the Sala di Costantino stimulated Giulio and Penni to elaborate a real series conceived in a manner as grandiose and discursive in its narrative as the pieces depicted in the frescoes. We might also propose that the project may not have been developed in the early 1520s because of the collapse of Giulio and Penni's partnership, or because of Giulio's departure for Mantua, or because the project was too costly.

Where the design of the *Deeds* suggests a collaborative effort, the two extant preparatory studies and the ten surviving *modelli* (nine in the Louvre and one in Chantilly) for the *Triumphs* are all

from Giulio's hand (see fig. 168, cat. nos. 41, 42).<sup>31</sup> The *Deeds* are conceived in a style that calls to mind the frescoes Penni and Giulio painted together in the Sala di Costantino, with multiple focal points and large numbers of diminutive figures placed in a broad, deep landscape. By contrast, the *Triumphs* reflect the more mannered approach Giulio developed in Mantua during the late 1520s. Representing boisterous, heavy-limbed figures marching, prancing, and dancing across the foregrounds of the compositions, the designs for the *Triumphs* have a friezelike character, in which the sense of depth is subordinated to linear emphasis. Compositionally, the scenes blend the rhythmic cadences of Trajan's column and the format of Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*, in a form that is virile and full of movement, a perfect example of what Pietro Aretino characterized as Giulio's ability to think "anticamente moderni e modernamente antichi."<sup>32</sup> The marked contrast between the *modelli* for the *Deeds* and the *Triumphs* evidently extended to the tapestries, giving rise to a seventeenth-century tradition, recorded by Félibien in 1666, that claimed that the *Deeds* were purchased by Francis I and the *Triumphs* by Henry II.<sup>33</sup> As we have seen, the documents demonstrate that this was not the case, and the divergence in style presumably results from the fact that Penni was responsible for the *modelli* of the earlier



group of designs, while the *Triumphs* were conceived by Giulio without Penni's participation in any aspect of their execution in the early 1530s.

### Cartoons

The artist or team of artists responsible for painting the cartoons of the *Deeds* is undocumented. The cartoons for the four tapestries presented to Francis in August 1532 must have been prepared as early as 1530, but where they were made is unknown. With the exception of the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Grotesques of Leo X* cartoons, the Raphael-school designs appear to have been enlarged into cartoon form in Brussels under the direction of Vincidor, and it seems likely that this would have been done for the *Scipio* series as well. After all, Brussels was the town in which artists specialized in such work. Support for this assumption is provided by the record of Primaticcio's mission—referred to above—to travel from France to Flanders in late 1532 or 1533, although the exact purpose of his journey is unclear. D'Astier proposed that it was made in response to a change in the original conception and that Primaticcio was taking a single *modello* to Brussels and bringing back a related cartoon, while other critics have interpreted the wording of the document that refers to the trip more loosely, as evidence that Primaticcio was conveying the designs for the *Triumphs* to Brussels and returning with the cartoons of the four *Deeds* that had already been finished. Whatever the case, the document demonstrates circumstantially that the cartoons for at least the *Triumphs* were executed in Brussels, probably under the supervision of Primaticcio. It may also suggest that the cartoons for part of the series were returned to Francis after they had been used, thus ensuring the king's monopoly of the design.<sup>34</sup>

### Patron

Not only the circumstances surrounding the development of the initial concept—in Rome in the early 1520s or in Mantua about 1528—are uncertain; so too are those in which the option to purchase the set arose for Francis. As Giulio was Federico's principal artist, it might seem logical to assume that the *Deeds* were originally conceived for his use. There is, however, no extant evidence that Giulio designed tapestries for the duke during the 1520s, and the series he subsequently designed for the Gonzaga and Este were much smaller than the grand, multifigured *Deeds of Scipio*. For these reasons and because we know from Vasari that Giulio produced designs for a variety of mediums for patrons other than Federico while he was in the duke's employ, it is appropriate to postulate that the *Scipio* drawings were made for a different client. But were they conceived specifically for Francis I? The putative

dating of the conception of the series to the early 1520s allows for the possibility that it was initiated for Francis at that date, when relations between the French court and the papacy were flourishing, and that the project was delayed because of his defeat at Pavia in 1525 and imprisonment in Spain until March 1526. Or we might propose, alternatively, that the series was an independently conceived project that was brought to Francis's attention at some point during the 1520s, perhaps even before the debacle at Pavia, and then developed after his repatriation to France. Francis first met Federico at Milan in 1515, and subsequently they traveled to France together on a trip during which they are known to have discussed artistic matters.<sup>35</sup> Despite Francis's defeat at Pavia and Federico's strong links with Charles V, connections between the French court and Mantua remained close. Furthermore, the active role such agents as Pietro Aretino played in acquiring Italian works of art for Francis during the late 1520s makes both possibilities outlined here entirely feasible.<sup>36</sup> However, the evidence that Francis only contracted to buy the complete set of tapestries after he had been shown three pieces in July 1532 does not, on the face of it, support the idea that the king initiated the scheme, or that he had a proprietary claim to the designs prior to that date.

A third theory is suggested by information first recorded in the seventeenth century. An account provided by Pierre de Bourdeilles, seigneur of Brantôme, relates that Crétif offered the set to Francis rather than to Charles V because of the French king's greater "liberalité," and, writing in 1752, the French chronicler Germain Brice reported a tradition whereby the set had been conceived for Charles V but had been sold instead to his rival, the king of France, because Charles did not have the money to pay for it. Following the lead of these two early observers, Delmarcel has suggested that Federico may have commissioned the *Triumphs* designs as a presentation to Charles V when the latter stayed in Mantua in March 1530 on his return home from his coronation by the pope in Bologna. (Federico was promoted from marquis to duke in April of that year.) According to this hypothesis, Crétif subsequently offered the set to Francis when it became clear that Charles, for unknown reasons, was not interested in acquiring the tapestries or was unable to pay for them.<sup>37</sup> This analysis is unconvincing, however, because it does not accord with what we know of Charles's character or the chronology that can be established for the four tapestries that were displayed and then sold to Francis I in July 1532. Assuming that the tapestries took approximately eighteen months to weave, it is possible that the cartoons for the first four pieces could have been created from designs presented to Charles in March 1530 if he had passed them on to Crétif immediately. But even if this had been the case, it is highly unlikely that Crétif

would have offered the tapestries to Charles's rival so soon after the emperor rejected them—despite the temporary thaw in relations that was taking place between the French and Habsburg courts and the marriage of Francis to Charles's sister, Eleanor, in July 1530. Charles was a keen tapestry patron, and although he was sometimes slow to pay his bills (as demonstrated by van Aelst's mortgaging the *Honors* tapestries to the Fuggers before Charles agreed to purchase them in 1526), it seems most improbable that he would have allowed this extremely militaristic celebration of one of the greatest antique heroes to fall into his rival's hands, whatever the temporary political climate.

A fourth theory about the conception and sale of the tapestries was suggested by d'Astier in his fundamental survey of the series. Reiterated by Forti Grazzini at the time of the major Giulio exhibition in Mantua in 1989, this hypothesis maintains that the *modelli*, through unknown circumstances, belonged to Crétif, not to Francis or Charles, and that the series came into being as an entrepreneurial exercise, funded by Crétif himself.<sup>38</sup> As has been shown (see above, pp. 24, 30, 278, 280–82), entrepreneurial activity of this kind dated back to the late fourteenth century, when it was practiced by the Arras and Paris merchants who supplied the courts of Burgundy, Paris, and Berry, and it became an increasingly important aspect of the Netherlandish tapestry trade during the 1530s and 1540s. In any event, if we subscribe to d'Astier's argument we might suppose that, however the designs for the *Deeds* were conceived, they somehow came into Crétif's hands in the late 1520s and that he had the cartoons for the first four pieces developed, knowing that he would be likely to find a patron for the set at one of the European courts.

We might go even further and suggest that Francis, hearing of this enterprise and having acquired the option to purchase the *Deeds*, through the agency of the mysterious Francoys de Francoys of Lucca, commissioned Giulio to provide additional designs in order to adapt the original series to the dimensions of a specific venue. Certainly, we know from Vasari that Francis had attempted to attract Giulio to his court. The effort was rebuffed by Federico but resulted in the dispatch of Giulio's pupil Primaticcio, who, as noted above, arrived in France shortly after March 23, 1532. That Primaticcio came to the French court so close to the time the contract with Crétif was generated, on July 11, 1532, has led to the suggestion that Giulio's pupil may have carried the *modelli* for the *Triumphs* from Mantua to France, thus resulting in a situation that encouraged Francis to draw up a contract for the entire twenty-two piece ensemble with Crétif. This theory is attractive, especially in view of Primaticcio's subsequent journey to Flanders, where he presumably played a part in directing the

execution of the cartoons. The notion that the *Triumphs* were designed, or at least modified, to take account of Francis's particular needs is supported by the fact that the combined length of the *Triumphs* and the *Deeds* is equal to that of the Galerie François I at Fontainebleau, which was constructed between 1528 and 1530.<sup>39</sup> Although the stucco and fresco decorations subsequently executed in the gallery by Rosso and Primaticcio would have prevented the display of the tapestries in this forum, it is entirely possible that this enormously costly series was initiated for use in one of Francis's most cherished palaces.

Many questions remain to be answered with regard to the context in which the designs of the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio* were conceived and the circumstances surrounding the weaving of the first four pieces. The fact remains that between 1532 and 1535 Francis acquired one of the most expensive tapestry commissions executed during the sixteenth century and that this series embodied stylistic ideas that were to have a profound impact on Netherlandish tapestry design in the 1530s and the 1540s.

### Significance

The *Scipio* designs were revolutionary in a variety of ways.<sup>40</sup> In terms of theme, they formed the first extensive tapestry series, apart from the *Acts of the Apostles* (see cat. nos 18–25) and the *Life of Christ* (see cat. no. 29), and certainly the first history series in the tapestry medium, conceived with an intensely imagined vision of the classical world, replete with accurate representations of its costumes and its customs. As such, it was immensely stimulating to Netherlandish designers such as Pieter Coecke van Aelst and Michiel Coxcie during the 1530s and 1540s. Structurally, the *Deeds* and the *Triumphs* were also of great significance. The *Deeds* provided a new model for the depiction of grand narrative subjects on an epic scale, with the main action in the center and subsidiary events portrayed at the sides in an extended landscape. (It is true that van Orley's *Battle of Pavia* tapestries, woven about 1528–31, employed this format before the *Deeds* were woven for Francis I. However, the citation of the *Capture of Carthage* from the *Deeds* in the Netherlandish artist's Romulus and Remus *modello* of 1524, noted above, suggests that other *modelli* from the *Scipio* series may also have been available to him in Brussels by the mid-1520s and that they may thus have inspired some of the *Pavia* scenes.) In contrast, the *Triumphs* replaced Raphaelesque classicism with an alternative formula that was more concerned with line, movement, and rhythm than with spatial issues, a formula that was to be particularly influential for Coecke's later work and the production of the unidentified follower of Giulio responsible for such designs as the *Fructus belli* and the *Story of Moses* (see below, pp. 395–98).



### Later Versions

The payment to Primaticcio in 1532–33 indicates that he may have been charged to bring one or more full-scale cartoons back from Brussels to the French court. Nonetheless, various partial duplicate sets were woven during the 1540s and 1550s. If Francis did retain the cartoons to ensure his exclusive ownership of the designs (which is less certain than sometimes assumed), we must surmise that these later versions were woven from second-generation cartoons based on the original *modelli* or copies of them that remained in the hands of the Brussels merchant-weavers who had produced the editio princeps. The earliest documented reweaving of the *Scipio* design was a seven-piece set sold to Mary of Hungary by the Antwerp merchant Erasmus Schets, which had probably been manufactured at the workshop of Balthazar van Vlierden. This was made up of five of the *Deeds* (see fig. 154) and two of the *Triumphs* (see cat. no. 43). Another set was delivered for Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este in 1551 (which may survive in part in the Museo Stibbert, Florence, and the Accademia Belgica, Rome).<sup>41</sup> The character of these two sets is close to that of the Penni *modelli*, with slight figures placed in deep landscapes. A ten-piece set of the *Deeds* was woven in the late 1540s for Jacques d'Albon, the marshal of Saint André, a favorite of Henry II, or his son Jean.<sup>42</sup> Although the original set is now dispersed (to San Simeon, Calif., and the Cincinnati Art Museum) and partly destroyed, a fine copy made at the Gobelins Manufactory in the late seventeenth century is now in the Louvre, along with four of the original cartoons (see fig. 194).<sup>43</sup> This set included a number of scenes not found in Francis's tapestries; moreover, its figures are bulkier and more muscular, indicating that the d'Albon set was woven from a set of cartoons different from those used for Francis's and Mary of Hungary's sets. The figure types in d'Albon's tapestries suggest that their cartoons may have been prepared under the supervision of Coxcie (see below, pp. 404–5).

### GIULIO'S LATER TAPESTRY DESIGNS

Despite Giulio's evident facility in the discipline, there is no documentation that Federico commissioned tapestry designs from him until 1539, by which time the artist had already provided designs for a set of the *Gigantomachia*, and possibly a second group for a *Story of Hercules* to the duke's cousin Ercole II d'Este. These were woven at the workshop established in Ferrara in 1538–39 under the direction of two Netherlandish brothers, Jan and Nicolas Karcher (see below, pp. 484–85). In 1539 Federico persuaded Nicolas to relocate with a team of eleven weavers to Mantua, where the first set of tapestries they made was one devoted to *Puttini* based on designs by Giulio (see cat. nos. 57–59). This set represents the first concrete evidence of a tapestry series produced for Federico from

a design by Giulio. It should be noted, however, that while we have very little specific information about Federico's tapestry patronage, the inventory taken after his death reveals that his tapestry collection was large and impressive (unfortunately the inventory gives few details of the subjects treated).<sup>44</sup> It is therefore quite possible that Giulio did, in fact, provide designs for Federico that were executed in the Low Countries during the 1530s and of which all trace has been lost.

Circumstantial evidence that this may have been the case has been provided recently by Delmarcel's identification of a tapestry representing *Cephalus Mourning over the Body of Procris* (fig. 156) as a faithful reproduction of a design by Giulio that is now in Frankfurt (fig. 155).<sup>45</sup> This drawing is one of a group depicting mythological-hunt accidents, such as the *Death of Adonis*, the *Hunt of the Calydonian Boar*, and *Hylas and the Nymphs*. Hartt proposed that these drawings may have been intended for decorative panels in the Marmiolo palace, while Oberhuber thought that they perhaps were models for frescoes. Delmarcel's identification of the *Cephalus* tapestry, however, suggests that they were made as tapestry designs. Further support for this idea is provided by a fine tapestry of the *Death of Adonis*, based on another of this group of mythological-hunt drawings, a tapestry that appeared at auction in the 1930s and then again more recently (location unknown).<sup>46</sup> The border of the *Cephalus* tapestry is typical of those used in Netherlandish production in the mid-1530s, a fact noted by Delmarcel. As such, this piece may testify that Giulio produced a number of otherwise undocumented tapestry designs for Federico for execution in the Low Countries during the mid-1530s.

A second design series of the mid- to late 1530s that Delmarcel has considered in this context depicted the *Story of the Sabine Women*. A sixteenth-century set on this subject was formerly in Louis XIV's collection, whose records assigned its design to Giulio, an attribution that was repeated by Félibien in his *Entretiens* in 1685.<sup>47</sup> That set was destroyed after the Revolution, but its appearance can be reconstructed on the basis of four early Brussels reweavings and copies of the designs made at the Paris ateliers in the seventeenth century.<sup>48</sup> The borders of the Brussels tapestries are identical to those around the *Cephalus* tapestry, suggesting that their design was conceived in the mid- to late 1530s, a dating supported by the fact that a weaving of the set seems to have been among a group of tapestries that Henry VIII acquired for Westminster Palace in the late 1530s.<sup>49</sup> Here it should be noted that although the designs demonstrate a familiarity with Giulio's work, the etiolated nature of the figures and the general lack of invention may indicate that they were created by an artist in his circle rather than by the master himself. Whether this work was undertaken



Fig. 155. *Cephalus Mourning over the Body of Procris*. Modello for the tapestry by Giulio Romano, ca. 1530–35. Pen and brown ink, brown wash with white highlights on paper, 33.3 x 56 cm. Städelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt



Fig. 156. *Cephalus Mourning over the Body of Procris*. Tapestry designed by Giulio Romano, woven in Brussels, ca. 1535. Wool and silk, 295 x 465 cm. Location unknown



under Giulio's direction or independently by an Italian artist who had traveled from Mantua to the Netherlands in the mid-1530s is unclear. However, it is certain that the style of design is closely related to that of a group of tapestries woven for Ferrante Gonzaga during the 1540s, and it is likely that their author was responsible for the *Sabine* designs as well (see discussion of Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona below, pp. 395–98).

#### PERINO DEL VAGA

Contemporaneous with the execution of the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio*, between 1532 and 1535, the Brussels workshops were also engaged in the production of a number of extraordinary tapestry sets for Andrea I Doria (1466–1560), designed by another of Raphael's former collaborators, Perino del Vaga (Pietro Buonaccorsi, 1501–1547). Doria was a Genoese condottiere, who, as commander of the fleet of Genoa helped the French recapture the city from imperial forces in 1524. Impatient with his treatment by Francis I, he joined forces with Emperor Charles V in 1528 on the expiration of his contract with the French. He was subsequently to enjoy an especially cordial relationship with the emperor, who, according to their agreement, established Genoa as a republic. Although Doria refused offers of the lordship and dogeship of the republic, he accepted the title of perpetual censor, in which capacity he exercised predominant influence in Genoa's councils. In 1531 Charles gave Doria the city of Melfi and the title prince of Melfi. During the 1530s Doria was very active in the emperor's service, commanding several expeditions against the Turks and playing an important role in the capture of Tunis in 1535. When not campaigning, Doria devoted his attention to building and decorating the palace he constructed in the suburbs of Genoa at Fassolo (now known as the Palazzo del Principe Doria).<sup>50</sup>

The design and decoration of this palace was entrusted to Perino del Vaga, one of the most brilliant artists to have emerged from Raphael's studio. Perino had trained in Florence and in early 1516 traveled to Rome, where he is said to have joined the Raphael workshop at the recommendation of Giulio and Penni.<sup>51</sup> Working in part from designs by Raphael, he collaborated in the decoration of the Vatican Loggia, and worked with Giovanni da Udine on the ceiling frescoes of the Sala dei Pontefici in 1521. His first major independent commission was for the decoration of the interior of the Palazzo Baldassini in Rome, executed between 1521 and 1525. During the same period he also carried out frescoes in the Cappella Pucci in the church of Trinità dei Monti for Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci, and on the ceiling of the Cappella del Crocifisso in San Marcello in Rome for Clement VII. According to Vasari, Perino was persuaded to move to Genoa by Nicola Valentini, Doria's upholsterer and embroiderer, in

1528.<sup>52</sup> For Perino it was a most opportune time to relocate: he had suffered the depredations of the Sack of Rome and intense personal trials, including imprisonment of himself and his family, which ended only after he had payed a ransom.

Vasari tells us that Doria welcomed Perino to Genoa with great warmth and over the next few years was closely involved in discussions with him regarding the aggrandizement and decoration of the palace at Fassolo. The scheme Perino carried out celebrated Doria's role as champion of the Republic of Genoa under the patronage of Charles V. This theme was announced on the exterior of the building in a fresco showing *Jason and the Golden Fleece*, which was obviously intended as an homage to the Order of the Golden Fleece that Charles bestowed on Doria in 1531.<sup>53</sup> In 1533 and 1536 Charles visited Doria and stayed in the palace on which occasions it fulfilled the function and enjoyed the status of an imperial residence. Anticipation of such a function appears to have played a major part in determining the interior decorations, which encompassed frescoes, paintings, stuccoes, and tapestries. The author of the iconographic program is unknown, and there seem to have been few prominent Genoese scholars who might have been involved. Vasari indicates that Perino worked very closely with Doria in developing the decorations, so it is possible that the artist and his patron were jointly responsible for the scheme. Aretino described Perino to Titian as "d'intelletto mirabile" (possessing a marvelous mind), implying that Perino would have been quite capable of devising the plan for this visual panegyric.<sup>54</sup>

Eyewitness accounts demonstrate that contemporaries attributed much of the magnificence of the palace to Doria's textiles. The inventory of Doria's holdings taken in 1561 demonstrates that, in addition to the rich suites of brocade and velvet he obtained through Valentini, he possessed more than two hundred tapestries.<sup>55</sup> While the majority of these were verdure, the collection also included a number of figurative sets. Some of them, such as a set known as the *Medallion Months*, depicting seasonal scenes and allegorical figures within medallions decorated with symbols of the zodiac, were evidently woven from Netherlandish cartoons. There is no reason to assume that Doria was involved in the inception of these designs.<sup>56</sup> Others, however, were clearly made to order from designs provided by Perino. These included a seven-piece set of *Furti di Giove*, four pieces of *Caritas*, six pieces of *Aeneas*, and several ensembles of grotesque subjects. These sets must have been among the most ambitious tapestry ensembles commissioned to order by an Italian patron from the Brussels workshops during the 1530s. They reflect the high value Doria placed on tapestry, relative to the other arts, as a means of projecting and reinforcing his stature.

## FURTI DI GIOVE

The *Furti di Giove* tapestries were evidently made for the principal room of the palace, the Sala di Giove, which was probably adjacent to Doria's private apartment and seems to have been used by the emperor as an audience chamber during his visits in 1533 and 1536. The name of the room derives from the ceiling painting that depicted *Jupiter Expelling the Giants* (fig. 157), which apparently was chosen as a metaphor for Charles defeating the enemies of the Catholic Church.<sup>57</sup> The earliest certain account of the tapestries woven for this location is provided in a description that was sent to Cosimo de' Medici in 1548 when his son Francesco visited Genoa on the occasion of a visit by Prince Philip of Spain. According to this report, Philip's lodgings were "furnished with the richest tapestries of gold and silk, in which one saw all the fables of Jupiter that the Poets imagined worked and woven with marvelous ingenuity."<sup>58</sup> Additional detail is provided by the 1561 Doria inventory, which lists seven pieces of the *Furti di Giove*. Subsequent inventories demonstrate that six pieces of the set had a height of 4.6 meters and a total length of about 28 meters. The seventh panel, actually composed of five tapestries sewn together in the shape of an inverted E, with a total width of 8.5 meters, was evidently intended to surround the two windows that occupied the south end of the room. In view of the dimensions of the room, it

is clear that the other tapestries were intended to completely cover the remaining walls and windows. They were presumably hung so that adjacent tapestries met, edge to edge, in front of the principal doors, and were drawn back to allow access.

Although the whereabouts of the *Furti di Giove* tapestries can be traced until the late seventeenth century, their subsequent fate is unknown. However, as Davidson has demonstrated in a seminal article, their appearance can be reconstructed on the basis of preparatory sketches and a *modello* by Perino (fig. 158) and an eighteenth-century copy (fig. 159) and engravings of five of the cartoons (which were extant at that date in the Orléans collection). More recently, the central section of the original cartoon for one of the tapestries has come to light in the holdings of the Louvre (fig. 161), confirming Davidson's assumptions, including her suggestion that Perino played a role in the execution not only of the *modelli* but also of the cartoons.<sup>59</sup>

### Reconstruction and Subject

The most complete impression of the lost tapestries is provided by a *modello* depicting *Jupiter and Juno* (fig. 158), formerly in the Heseltine collection, and an eighteenth-century copy of the original cartoon for *Jupiter's Seduction of Io* (fig. 159). These demonstrate that each scene was staged in a *trompe l'oeil* architectural



Fig. 157. *Jupiter Expelling the Giants*. Ceiling fresco by Perino del Vaga, ca. 1530. Sala di Giove, Palazzo del Principe Doria, Genoa





Fig. 158. *Jupiter and Juno*. Modello for the tapestry from the *Furti di Giove* by Perino del Vaga, ca. 1530. Pen and ink with wash and white heightening on paper, 43.1 x 40 cm. Location unknown (formerly Heseltine collection, London)

setting comprising a raised socle, flanked by Corinthian columns supporting a coffered ceiling with pendant swags. The area below the socle featured trompe l'oeil reliefs and a carved armorial cartouche flanked by putti. The subjects of the other scenes can be deduced from two preparatory sketches by Perino—one of *Jupiter and Semele*, the other of *Jupiter and Alcmene* (Courtauld Institute Galleries, London)—and eighteenth-century engravings showing the central scenes of the five cartoons then in the Orléans collection.<sup>60</sup> The engravings reversed the cartoons, themselves designed in reverse, so that the prints appear in the direction of the tapestries. Using this evidence, Davidson identified the six subjects of the set as the seductions by Jupiter of Juno, Alcmene, Calisto, Danae, Semele, and Io. This scholar also suggested that each of the three *tramezzo* sections depicted allegorical figures. The cartoons for two of these survive.<sup>61</sup>

The designs were remarkable and innovative in numerous respects. Trompe l'oeil architectural frameworks were familiar, and Perino would have been aware of those in the Raphael-school frescoes in the Vatican and elsewhere, but his application of them on this scale in the tapestry medium was entirely new. Altogether new as well was the apparent design of the tapestries to provide an all-surrounding environment. At the time it was created, the set must have been the most ambitious illusionistic



Fig. 159. *Jupiter's Seduction of Io*. Tapestry design attributed to Pierre François Basan after Perino del Vaga. Black chalk, brown wash, with touches of white heightening, squared in black chalk, 34.3 x 31.2 cm. Private collection, New York

exercise ever attempted in tapestry. Equally remarkable was the way Perino conceived the theme of this set, as well as those for the Neptune and Caritas salons, as an extension of the iconography of the ceiling paintings. These suites seem to have been the first attempt at such an all-encompassing iconographic scheme. As Cordellier has recently noted, however, Perino's idea may well have been inspired by a tapestry project conceived by Raphael for the Loggia di Psiche at the Chigi villa (Farnesina; fig. 74) that was coordinated with the site's frescoes. No tapestries of the kind were executed, but an impression of such a scheme may be recorded by engravings of the *Story of Psyche* by the Master of the Die.<sup>62</sup> Tapestries meant to be combined with ceiling paintings were subsequently developed by Battista Dossi in the designs he prepared for the weavers at Ercole d'Este's workshop in Ferrara in the 1540s and then by Vasari and Salviati in designs produced for Cosimo de' Medici during the 1550s (see below, pp. 501–3).

The figural style of the *Furti di Giove* set owed an obvious debt to that of the frescoes in the Loggia di Psiche. In addition, the figures and subject of the tapestries were closely related to erotic drawings Perino made in Rome for a series of the *Loves of the Gods*, engraved by Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio. These engravings, in turn, were inspired by the erotic illustrations Giulio had

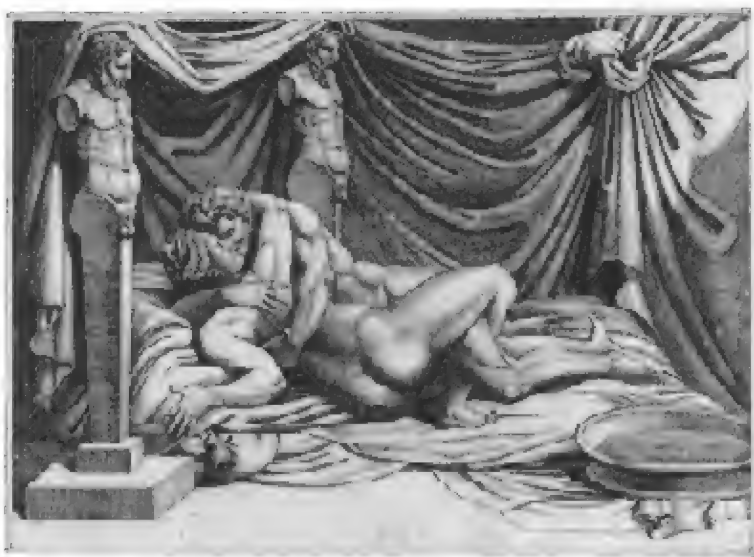


Fig. 160. *Undicesima posizione*. Engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi after Giulio Romano from *I modi*, 1524. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

provided to accompany Aretino's bawdy sonnets *Sonetti lussuriosi*; Marcantonio Raimondi's engravings of these illustrations were published together as *I modi* (see fig. 160).<sup>63</sup> Like these precedents, the central scenes of the tapestries placed the protagonists in a shallow space. The visual emphasis was thus wholly on the figures, producing the first attempt to present an extended series of nudes in the tapestry medium.

However, as Davidson observed, the erotic character of the earlier exercises is largely absent in the tapestry designs. She has also remarked that the subject appears to have been carefully chosen to complement the theme of the ceiling painting, suggesting that where the vault depicts Jupiter (God and Charles) defeating rebellion and ignorance, the tapestries offered a contrasting message: mortals who seek union with God receive honor and immortality in the next world. According to this interpretation the subjects were intended as exempla of divine love and Jupiter's affairs with the women "provide an allegory of redemption."<sup>64</sup> In support of her argument, Davidson noted that the depictions stress union rather than overt eroticism and that Jupiter is portrayed as highly dignified. Indeed, the seductions in which he assumed animal disguises—that is, of Leda, Ganymede, and Europa—are all absent from the series.

If these quasi-erotic scenes provided a rather tongue-in-cheek allegory of the redemptive power of divine love and imperial favor, they also resonated with another meaning: the *Loves of the Gods* was the subject of the set of tapestries that Arachne wove in her famous competition with Minerva, as described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (6.96–132). Evidence that this antique source must have been in Perino's mind as he worked out his program is

provided by the ceiling paintings in the Stanza delle Metamorfosi at the Doria palace, where the compartments and vaults include scenes of both the loves of the gods and the weaving competition between Arachne and Minerva. The *Furti di Giove* designs, informed by a spirit similar to that of Giovanni da Udine's *Giochi di putti* and *Grotesques of Leo X* and Giulio and Penni's *Deeds of Scipio* designs, thus provide yet another example of a scheme developed by a Raphael-school pupil whose theme was based on an awareness of antique prototypes.

#### Design and Cartoons

The assignment of the *Furti* designs to Perino can be asserted with absolute certainty on the basis of the artist's role at Genoa, the relationship of the designs to his other work, and the attribution of the Heseltine drawing, whose provenance can be traced back to the collection of Roberti Canonici in Ferrara in 1632, when it was given to Perino.

That Perino was also responsible for the cartoons is indicated by circumstantial evidence: they were returned to Doria following the execution of the tapestries, as attested by the 1606 and 1620 inventories, in which they were listed as forty-six pieces "di carta dipinti."<sup>65</sup> Although Doria may have taken the cartoons back simply to ensure that the designs were not reproduced for any other patron, their return may also indicate that they were considered to be art objects in their own right and thus were probably Perino's. If indeed Perino painted or supervised the painting of the cartoons himself rather than entrusting the enlargement of his designs to Netherlandish cartoonists, it is surely of note. Assuming that the *Furti di Giove* commission postdated that of the *Story of Aeneas*, which is by no means certain, Davidson suggested that this decision may have reflected dissatisfaction with the cartoons the Netherlandish artists prepared for that set.<sup>66</sup> As Cordellier has more recently written, Perino's involvement with the cartoons may also demonstrate the importance that he and Doria attached to the hangings for the Sala di Giove, the most important salon in the palace.<sup>67</sup>

The cartoons were probably sold to the earl of Arundel sometime after 1620 as five, now reconstructed, can be recognized in the 1655 inventory taken after the death of the countess of Arundel, in which they are described as "aguazzo" (gouache) with an attribution to Perino. By 1689 they were hanging in the music room of Queen Christina of Sweden's palace in Rome, attributed to Giulio. Following Christina's death, they passed through various hands, into the collection of Prince Livio Odescalchi, and from him to the duke of Orléans in 1722, at which time they were described as "colorié en détrempe sur du papier" (colored with distemper on paper). They were not included in the Orléans sale in England



but by 1824 were said to be in a private collection in Paris. After this they disappeared and, until recently, were all thought to have been destroyed. However, as is now apparent, the *Jupiter and Danae* cartoon (fig. 161) entered the Louvre collection in the late 1820s with an attribution to Giulio. With the publication of Davidson's article on the set in 1988, the true identity of the artist responsible for it and the context in which it was created were revealed, leading to its recent conservation and exhibition in Mantua.<sup>68</sup>

#### Date

The lost Heseltine *modello* (fig. 158) shows a plain circlet above the armorial cartouche in the foreground, while the eighteenth-century drawing from the cartoon of *Jupiter's Seduction of Io* (fig. 159) depicts an eight-pointed crown, suggesting that the original design was adapted after December 20, 1531, when Charles gave Doria the city of Melfi and the title prince of Melfi. Assuming that this change indicates the period during which the designs were being developed, that the cartoons were painted shortly afterward, and

that the tapestries would have taken twelve to eighteen months to weave, it seems unlikely that they were ready when Charles visited Genoa from March 28 to April 9, 1533. This last supposition appears to be confirmed by a detailed contemporary description of the textiles displayed in the state rooms when Charles was in Genoa. This account mentions only hangings depicting "prati fiorenti" (meadow flowers) and thus suggests the rooms were decorated with verdure tapestries, presumably some of those recorded in the 1561 inventory.<sup>69</sup> But evidence that the set may have been completed by the time of Charles's second visit to Genoa, from October 14 to November 18, 1536, is presented in an undated letter from Doria's upholsterer, Valentini, to a friend. Here Valentini stated that the decorations displayed at the palace during Charles's stay were so magnificent that they had been described as the most superb things that had been made in Italy until then. He went on to complain, however, that the tapestries "made in Flanders that follow the stories of the pictures in the vaults of the said chambers that had been made on purpose were praised by all the lords more than the



Fig. 161. *Jupiter and Danae*. Cartoon for the tapestry from the *Furti di Giove* by Perino del Vaga, ca. 1530. Tempera on paper mounted on canvas, 238.5 x 278.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 162. *Neptune Calming the Tempest*. Perino del Vaga, ca. 1528. Pen with black ink, gray wash, white heightening on paper, 18.6 x 35 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 163. *Quos ego*. Engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, 1516. 43.2 x 32.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Junius S. Morgan, 1919 (19.52.10)



brocades.”<sup>70</sup> Valentini’s pique provides us with a rare glimpse of the appreciation that must have attended and inspired so much of the courtly tapestry patronage of the day.

Although the place in which the *Furti di Giove* tapestries were manufactured is undocumented, Valentini’s letter confirms what we might in any event assume—that they were made in the Netherlands, presumably in Brussels, the center of high-quality figurative weaving at the time they were produced. Here it is to be noted that these designs must have been among the most challenging that had ever been woven in the Netherlands for their images required the depiction of subtle nuances of flesh tones and equally subtle nuances of background colors to indicate aerial perspective, achieved largely without the decorative and linear elements on which the tapestry weavers normally depended to suggest spatial recession. As such, the set was a truly fitting embodiment of the classical legend of Arachne’s *Loves of the Gods* tapestries, a splendid demonstration of the Raphael-school use of the princely medium of tapestry to re-create and enlarge upon the grandeur of the antique world. We can only regret that the passage of time has been as unkind to Doria’s tapestries as Minerva was to Arachne’s.

#### STORY OF AENEAS

Adjacent to the Sala di Giove, Perino created the Sala di Nettuno, which had a vault frescoed with an image of Neptune calming the storm, embodying “all the emotions aroused by the perils of the sea.”<sup>71</sup> The painting is no longer extant but the composition is known from a drawing by Perino that shows Neptune quelling the storm that has destroyed the Trojan fleet on the coast of Libya (fig. 162). This composition appears to have been inspired in part by the *Quos ego* engraving Marcantonio Raimondi executed after Raphael (fig. 163).<sup>72</sup> The subject derives from the first book of the *Aeneid*,<sup>73</sup> according to which the hero, Aeneas, was to found a kingdom in Italy and father a line that would produce a caesar who would inaugurate an empire of perpetual law and peace. The mantelpiece of the Neptune salon includes a marble relief carved with related imagery—Venus and Cupid at Vulcan’s forge, crowned by the inscription *Optima pandes* (You will reveal the best things), in reference to the scenes of the future that appeared on Aeneas’s shield and the vision Jupiter reveals of Rome’s future dominion in the opening book of the *Aeneid*. During the late medieval era this promise was often taken as a prophecy of the coming of Christ. Thus the implications of the fresco operated on various levels. On one it paired Doria the great admiral with Neptune, Jupiter’s brother; on another it provided a flattering allusion to Charles V as the fulfillment of the prophecy of a future

caesar; and on another it can be read as a metaphor of the Triumph of the Catholic Church under Charles V.<sup>74</sup>

Vasari provided the first and indeed the only contemporary published reference to this once-famous tapestry set which was evidently woven to complete the decorations of the Neptune chamber.<sup>75</sup> According to his *Life* of Perino, the artist made “drawings of the greater part of the Aeneid, with the stories of Dido, from which tapestries were woven.”<sup>76</sup> The 1561 inventory provides the additional information that the set comprised six pieces, and an inventory of 1741 indicates that the tapestries were 17 *palmi* high (425 cm) and between 15 and 18 *palmi* long (380–455 cm). These documents tell us that the tapestries were woven in silk and wool and were called the *Navigazione d’Enea*. They continued to be recorded in Doria inventories until the early nineteenth century, when they were at the Villa Doria Pamphilj in Rome, but their fate after 1825 is unknown.<sup>77</sup>

#### Design and Cartoons

The appearance of these lost tapestries, like that of the *Furti di Giove*, can be deduced from preparatory drawings and, in this case, later weavings of their design. Davidson identified one autograph drawing by Perino and two copies after lost drawings from his hand, which all illustrate scenes from the first book of the *Aeneid* and can be related to extant tapestry designs, as well as other drawings that may be preparatory studies for the series that were abandoned.<sup>78</sup> Two of the group of three that are linked to surviving tapestries demonstrate the conception and development of a scene of the banquet at which Cupid, disguised as Ascanius, made Dido fall in love with Aeneas. One, at Chatsworth, was executed rapidly in pen and brush, apparently as Perino worked out the composition in terms of volume and chiaroscuro. The second (fig. 164), from Hamburg, which carries Perino’s monogram, embodies a refined composition that more fully considers the nature of the tapestry medium. Here the high, angled viewpoint of the Chatsworth sketch has been replaced by a more frontal, friezelike arrangement whose figures appear parallel to the picture plane and in which the shadowy depth of the earlier sketch has given way to architectural elements that provide a stage for the foreground scene. As Davidson noted, the general composition, with the principal actors seated at a table at the left and the banquet being brought in from the right, and even such details as the distinctive feet of the three-legged table, derive from the Raimondi engraving that inspired Perino’s vault painting for the Sala di Nettuno.

Davidson’s study demonstrated that the Hamburg drawing was, in turn, the *modello* for a tapestry (fig. 165), from a design series that evidently enjoyed great success during the 1540s and



Fig. 164. *The Banquet of Dido and Aeneas*. Modello for the tapestry from the *Story of Aeneas* by Perino del Vaga, ca. 1532. Pen with gray wash and white heightening on paper, 218 x 24.3 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle

1550s and of which several partial sets survive. However, Perino's Hamburg *modello* and the related tapestry contrast markedly in style. Although the composition of the *modello* is more frontal than that of the Chatsworth sketch, like that drawing it is carried out essentially in terms of light and shade and volumetric forms in an architectural space, while the tapestry is conceived in a much more linear fashion, with the figures and landscape articulated by line and detail, rather than tonal nuances. As previous commentators have recognized, this divergence in style indicates beyond any question that the cartoons for the extant *Aeneas* tapestries were executed in Brussels, presumably from Perino's *modelli*. Yet it should be noted that these later weavings may not faithfully reproduce the Doria tapestries. The stylistic distance between the *Furti di Giove* designs and the extant *Aeneas* tapestries tells us that the latter were perhaps woven from second-generation cartoons that embodied a bastardized version of Perino's design, which was developed from the original conception for a commercial market.

Circumstantial support for this hypothesis is provided by the fact that while only six *Aeneas* tapestries are listed in the Doria



Fig. 165. *The Banquet of Dido and Aeneas*. Tapestry after design by Perino del Vaga, woven in Brussels, ca. 1535–40. Wool and silk, 495 x 742 cm. MAK–Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna



inventories, the Vienna tapestry of the *Banquet of Dido and Aeneas* belongs to a group that included many more than six designs. Several partial sets survive, among which there are twelve distinct scenes that Forti Grazzini has identified, and there may have been even more.<sup>79</sup> A set of this subject acquired in or before 1539 by James V, king of Scotland, included thirteen pieces, as did a set owned by Margaret of Parma. Another set purchased by Ferrante Gonzaga in 1549, apparently in anticipation of the visit of Prince Philip of Spain to Mantua, included fourteen pieces.<sup>80</sup>

Although she was not aware of all of these scenes, Davidson knew that there were more than six, which led her to suggest that, in circumstances that remain unclear, Perino may have provided a second group of designs to the Netherlandish ateliers at some point after he conceived the first set. More recently Forti Grazzini has argued that the generic character of the designs may demonstrate that the additional ones were provided by a Netherlandish artist.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, the extant tapestries are remarkably homogenous, and, apart from the scenes clearly made after *modelli* and sketches by Perino, it is not possible with any certainty to identify the examples that had a precedent in Doria's set. However, we might perhaps infer that the panels with subjects and compositions derived from the Raimondi *Quos ego* engraving were modeled after the original series.

#### Date

As noted above, Davidson suggested that the *Aeneas* set was conceived before the *Furti di Giove*, on the grounds that Doria reclaimed the cartoons for the latter; that they were returned, she argued, perhaps indicates that Perino had made them and that he had done so because Doria was dissatisfied with the execution and reproduction of the *Aeneas* cartoons by Netherlandish artists. But if the extant *Aeneas* panels provide an accurate record of the design of Doria's lost set the theory that they predate the *Furti* seems unlikely, as the figure types as they appear in the tapestries, and thus in the cartoons, are close to those in a number of other sets such as the *Story of Venus* and the *Story of Hercules* (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid) that are generally dated to the late 1530s. In fact, on the basis of the documentary information and the extant drawings and tapestries the most we can say with certainty is that Perino designed six *Aeneas* tapestries for Doria and that these designs formed the point of departure for an extended series of tapestries on this subject that was developed in Brussels in the mid- to late 1530s.

#### CARITAS AND GROTESQUES TAPESTRIES

In addition to the *Furti di Giove* and *Aeneas* tapestries, the 1561 inventory records a four-piece set on the theme of *Caritas*. If this group, like Doria's other made-to-order decorations, was meant to repeat

ceiling decorations of a particular room in his palace, presumably it was executed for the small room between the two large salons, in the vault of which the Roman *Caritas* was depicted. No visual evidence of this set survives.

A fourth design series that must be considered in the context of Perino's activity in Genoa is a group of tapestries known collectively as the *Doria Grotesques* (to distinguish them from Giovanni da Udine's *Grotesques of Leo X* design series). The *Doria Grotesques* depict classical gods on a dark blue field surrounded by grotesque decorations. At least sixteen of them depicting nine or possibly ten different themes survived into recent times.<sup>82</sup> They seem to derive from three separate but related groups, a number determined by the fact that one of the designs, of Mars, is known in three variant forms. One, incorporating a cartouche with a scene of Genoa's port, is destroyed, the location of the second piece is unknown, and a third survives in Genoa. While the first two carried the Doria arms in the corners, the third has blank cartouches. Other extant panels depict Minerva (three versions of this are known, including one at the Metropolitan Museum; fig. 166), Neptune, Ceres, Venus, Hercules, Diana, Mercury, Pluto, and Bacchus. In the first analysis of this series Erkelens assumed that these dispersed tapestries came from three different sets, of which only one, identified by the Doria arms, had been in the Doria collection. In his study of Doria's patronage Boccardo demonstrated, however, that the collection's inventories record three "camere" (rooms) of wool and silk tapestries "a grottesco," indicating that all three groups likely were owned by Doria. As Forti Grazzini has noted, it can hardly be coincidental that the *Grotesques* tapestries depict the very same gods portrayed in Perino's Doria palace frescoes, where they embody a celebration of the new golden age inaugurated by Charles V and Doria, his lieutenant.<sup>83</sup> A more complex iconographic program may be encompassed in the tapestries and frescoes, but it has yet to be identified.

The *Doria Grotesques* are much simpler than the Giovanni da Udine series, which preceded them. Although Perino's works lack the narrative scenes and illusionistic space seen in the foregrounds of the earlier designs, they repeat their border motifs and include a number of their other elements as well.<sup>84</sup> No drawings or cartoons survive for the Perino tapestries, and the designs have been variously attributed. Erkelens gave them to Amico Aspertini on the basis of comparison to an unrelated drawing, while more recently they were credited to Lucio Romano by Davidson, who reasoned that their conception seemed too weak for Perino.<sup>85</sup> However, as Boccardo and later Forti Grazzini have argued, the dominant role played by Perino in the decoration of the Palazzo Doria and his continuing and abiding interest in the grotesque form, after he returned to Rome from Genoa, suggest that he was



Fig. 166. *Grotesques with Minerva*. Tapestry after Perino del Vaga, woven in Brussels, ca. 1540. Wool and silk, 381 x 404 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bequest of Annie C. Kane, 1926 (26.260.59)

indeed the designer. They also propose that the execution of the cartoons in Brussels from sketchy *modelli* and the mediocre quality of the weavings probably account for the deficiencies of design and composition. (That the *Grotesques* were woven in Brussels is attested by the town mark that appears on various pieces.) Forti Grazzini has theorized that these tapestries may be designs prepared for Doria after Perino returned to Rome from Genoa and that perhaps they are connected to the payment recorded in Doria accounts as made on November 5, 1545, to "Agostino Fabiano, master courier, to carry the

sketches of the cartoons that master Perino sent."<sup>86</sup> Indeed, along with the town mark of Brussels there appears on the panels the mark of the unidentified workshop of the Master of the Geometric Mark, who was active in the mid-sixteenth century and wove some of the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries for Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga in the late 1540s or early 1550s (cat. no. 24). Thus the presence of the mark of the Master of the Geometric Mark may provide circumstantial confirmation that Perino's *Grotesques* series is related to the documented payment of 1545.



Fig. 167. *Modello* for the Sistine Chapel *spalliera* by Perino del Vaga, ca. 1545. Pen with gray and brown wash over pencil on paper, 33.7 x 43.3 cm. Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence



#### PERINO IN ROME

Perino returned to Rome before 1538 and thereafter was involved in decorating the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne and the Cappella Massimi in Trinità dei Monti. Work for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese brought him to the attention of Pope Paul III, for whom he undertook various projects, including the frescoed ceiling of the Sala Regia and the pope's rooms at the Castel Sant'Angelo. Perino's prowess in the tapestry medium evidently led the pope to commission him to design a tapestry *spalliera* to hang below Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel. This work was to be woven in the Netherlands but according to Vasari remained incomplete at Perino's death; it presumably was never realized. The cartoon for this project survives today in the Palazzo Spada in Rome. It represents a trompe l'oeil architectural entablature with relief sculptures and is executed in tempera on canvas. The dimensions of the cartoon (240 x 980 cm) correspond to the spaces between the altar now in place and the two doors that existed in 1542. A preparatory drawing or *modello* for part of this design survives in the Uffizi (fig. 167), and a second sheet, possibly a copy after Perino, is in Palermo.<sup>87</sup>

In the context of discussion of tapestry designs conceived by Giulio and Perino in the 1530s, it is appropriate to call attention to the high-quality but little-known set of grotesques with roundels, *Apollo and the Four Seasons*, now in the Hermitage (see cat. no. 44). The whereabouts of this five-piece set before its acquisition by Baron Stieglitz in Saint Petersburg in 1885 are undocumented.<sup>88</sup> Four pieces were exhibited in Antwerp in 1994, on which occasion Delmarcel

demonstrated that embodiments of the Seasons depicted in the roundels were inspired by an ekphrastic account of some antique reliefs in Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. This famous Neoplatonic fantasy recounting the journey that Poliphilo, guided by Polia, made in a terrestrial paradise populated by figures from antique mythology, was first published by Aldo Manucci in Venice in 1499.<sup>89</sup> While assisting at the triumphal entry of Vertumnus and Pomona, god and goddess of the harvest and of gardens, the protagonists encounter an altar faced with marble reliefs. As Delmarcel showed, the description and the illustration of these reliefs in engravings accompanying the text were the prototypes for the personifications of the Seasons seen in the roundels of four of the Hermitage tapestries. The fifth (cat. no. 44) shows a medallion featuring signs of the zodiac and Apollo, whose portrayal is close in style to the figures of the deities in the *Story of Aeneas* tapestries, which, as we have seen, were surely based in part on *modelli* by Perino. Delmarcel noted the stylistic analogy between the five Hermitage tapestries and an engraving of 1532 by the Master of the Die after Perino but, on the basis of the vogue for grotesque tapestries in the 1550s, dated the series to about 1560. A comparison of the tapestries and decorations that Perino executed at the Doria palace during the 1530s and in Rome following his return there in 1538 reveals so many close links that it is tempting to attribute the design of this exquisite series to Perino with a dating in the early 1540s. The possibility that this design was executed for Paul III or his grandson Alessandro Farnese is considered in catalogue number 44.

1. Hartt 1958, pp. 73–77; B. Talvacchia in Grove 1996, vol. 12, pp. 753–59; Cox-Rearick in New York 1999, pp. 13–27.
2. Cox-Rearick in New York 1999, pp. 19–21.
3. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, pp. 549–50.
4. “[A]ydé a estre le moyen de luy faire avoir bon compte et marché d’une tapisserie d’or et de soie où sera contenu l’histoire de Scipion l’Affricain”; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS fr. 15626, fol. 46, no. 119; d’Astier 1907, pp. 15, 215–16, doc. 1. I thank Laura Weigert for checking the original document for me.
5. D’Astier 1907 pp. 216–18, doc. II; Paris 1978, p. 149.
6. D’Astier 1907, p. 16.
7. Carroll in Washington 1987, p. 223.
8. “[O]ù il doit porter un petit patron de l’histoire de Scipion l’Africain, destinée à la tapisserie que le Roy en fait faire à Bruxelles, et en rapporter le grand patron de ladite histoire”; *Catalogue des actes* 1887–1908, vol. 7, p. 701, no. 28467. Delmarcel (1997, p. 384) correctly notes that the journey was from France, not from Italy, as stated by Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, p. 468.
9. D’Astier 1907, pp. 16–17, 218–20 docs. III, IV; Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 5. Cox-Rearick 1996, p. 377, incorrectly gives the height as 2.47 m.
10. Cox-Rearick 1996, p. 378.
11. Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 33–36.
12. Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 15.
13. Reiset 1866, pp. 243–45; Paris 1978, p. 6.
14. D’Astier 1907; Jestaz and Bacou in Paris 1978. See also Cox-Rearick 1996, pp. 379–80.
15. Cast 1974; Horn 1989, pp. 284–85.
16. Cox-Rearick 1996, p. 380, lists thirteen pieces in Francis’s set of the *Deeds*, mistakenly including a scene known as the *Battle on the Plateau*, which was first created for the variant set of designs woven for Jacques d’Albon in the 1550s. Gnann repeats this error in Mantua and Vienna 1999, p. 208. For the correct analysis, see Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 55, and Lefébure 1993, p. 84.
17. Jestaz in Paris 1978, pp. 17–19.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 103–5.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
20. Hartt 1958, p. 227; Delmarcel 1997, p. 384.
21. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Estampes, BB 14b, fols. 32–34.
22. D’Astier 1907, pp. 73, 79, 90; Bacou in Paris 1978, pp. 21–22; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, pp. 467–68; Lefébure 1993, p. 86; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, pp. 206–7; Cox-Rearick 1996, pp. 379–80; Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, p. 129. For a recent and unconvincing attempt to reattribute the conception of this series to Raphael, see Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, pp. 208–11. For forceful rebuttals of this suggestion, see Monbeig-Goguel 1999, p. 498, and Wolk-Simon 2000.
23. Ferino-Pagden in Mantua 1989, pp. 262–63, 265. Again, inappropriately reattributed to Raphael by Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, p. 210.
24. Jaffé 1964–65, pt. 1, p. 396, n. 28, pt. 2, p. 35, pl. 24.
25. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 4, p. 550; Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 13; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, pp. 468–69. For a recent reattribution of this *modello* to Raphael and a subsequent reaffirmation of Penni’s authorship, see Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, pp. 208–9, and Monbeig-Goguel 1999, p. 498.
26. D’Astier 1907, p. 32; Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 13; Rome 1993, pp. 49–52.
27. Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 13.
28. Jestaz and Bacou in Paris 1978, pp. 13–14, 22–23, 86; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, p. 468; Cox-Rearick 1996, p. 380.
29. Ferino Pagden in Mantua 1989, pp. 262–65; Lefébure 1993, p. 86; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, pp. 206–7; Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, p. 129.
30. Pliny *Natural History* 35.22–25; Pollitt 1966, pp. 51–52.
31. D’Astier 1907, p. 33; Hartt 1958, pp. 227–31; Bacou in Paris 1978, pp. 106–7 and passim; Forti Grazzini 1989, pp. 468–73. For an additional copy after one of Giulio’s *Triumphs*, now in a private collection in Seattle, see M. McAuliffe in New York 1999, pp. 132–33.
32. Letter of June 1542, quoted by Cox-Rearick in New York 1999, p. 17.
33. Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 6.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 13; Cox-Rearick 1996, p. 378.
35. Tamalio 1997, pp. 79–80.
36. For Aretino’s activity, see Cox-Rearick 1996, pp. 88–95.
37. Delmarcel 1997, pp. 384–85.
38. D’Astier 1907, p. 28; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, p. 468.
39. Adelson in an unpublished lecture cited by Cox-Rearick 1996, p. 382.
40. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 92.
41. Baratte 1976, p. 120; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, p. 169; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, p. 207.
42. Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, pp. 207–8.
43. Jestaz in Paris 1978, pp. 7–11 and passim; Lefébure 1993, pp. 81–87.
44. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 85–89.
45. Delmarcel 1997, p. 391. The tapestry was sold at the Palais Galliera, Paris, June 10, 1966, no. 140. A tapestry, in fragmentary condition, reproducing Giulio’s design for the *Death of Adonis*, has also appeared on the French art market in recent years (location unknown).
46. R. Chochon, M.-F. Chochon, J.-P. Allardi, Drouot-Richelieu, Paris, February 3, 1990, no. 10.
47. Félibien 1685–88, vol. 1, pp. 436–37.
48. For the documentation, see Paris 1965a, pp. 37–38; for surviving pieces, see Asselberghs in Culan 1971, p. 16, and Franses 1986, pp. 18–22. For attribution of the design, see Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 202–4, 205, n. 11; and Delmarcel 1997, pp. 391–92.
49. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 163–64.
50. Boccardo 1989; Mantua 2001, passim.
51. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 593.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 612.
53. Boccardo 1989, p. 43.
54. Davidson 1988, p. 446.
55. Boccardo 1989, pp. 79–87.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 86.
57. Cordellier in Mantua 2001, p. 245 (with bibliog.).
58. “[A]pparata di ricchissimi arazzi d’oro, et argento, dove si vedevano con maraviglioso ingegno lavorate, e tessute tutte le favole, che i Poeti fingono di Giove”; Davidson 1988, p. 428; Cordellier in Mantua 2001, p. 245. Curiously, the inventories describe the tapestries as made of silk and wool alone. However, the 1548 account is so specific that it suggests that the lack of reference to metallic thread in the inventories is an omission.
59. Davidson 1988, pp. 424–29; Boccardo 1989, pp. 51–75; Cordellier in Mantua 2001, pp. 242–46.
60. Davidson 1988, pp. 433–42; Parma in Mantua 2001, pp. 248–49.
61. Parma in Mantua 2001, p. 255, nos. 133, 134.
62. Hoogewerff 1945, pp. 9–15; Hoogewerff 1963; Cordellier in Mantua 2001, p. 245.
63. Mantua 1989, pp. 278–79.
64. Davidson 1988, p. 447.
65. See Cordellier in Mantua 2001, pp. 242–43, for a full history.
66. Davidson 1990, p. 41.
67. Cordellier in Mantua 2001, p. 245.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 242–46; H. Bartelloni in Mantua 2001, p. 247. Images of the cartoon are reproduced in reverse in the Mantua catalogue.
69. Davidson 1988, p. 447; Cordellier in Mantua 2001, p. 246.
70. “[D]e le superbe cosse che sia mai stato fatte in italia da poi”; “fatte in



- fiandre che seguitano le istorie de le piture che sono nele volte de le ditte chamere quale furono fatte fare apossta che sono statte comendotte da tutti quessti signori piu che li brochatì”; Davidson 1988, p. 427.
71. “[T]utte le passioni che dànno le fortune marittime”; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 614; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 2, p. 172.
72. Gnann in Mantua 2001, p. 232, no. 118.
73. Parma Armani 1986, pp. 123–28, 271–72; Parma in Mantua 2001, pp. 208–9, no. 99.
74. Davidson 1990, pp. 36–39; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 2001, p. 239.
75. Davidson 1990; Forti Grazzini 1993; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 2001, pp. 238–41, nos. 123, 124.
76. “[I] disegni che e’ fece della maggior parte della Eneide con le storie di Didone, che se ne fece panni d’arazi”; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 617; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 2, p. 174.
77. Davidson 1990, pp. 35, 50 n. 57.
78. Davidson 1990; Parma in Mantua 2001, pp. 233–36, nos. 119–22.
79. Forti Grazzini 1993; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 2001, p. 240.
80. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 64, 100; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 2001, p. 240; T. Thomson 1815, p. 49.
81. Forti Grazzini in Mantua 2001, p. 240.
82. Erkelens 1962a; Boccardo 1989, p. 82; Boccardo in Mantua 2001, p. 260.
83. Forti Grazzini in Lugano 1998, p. 159.
84. Ibid.
85. Erkelens 1962a, pp. 132–34; Davidson 1988, p. 424, n. 5.
86. “Agostino Fabiano, maestro de’ correri, per il porto de li frexii de li cartoni che ha mandato maestro Perino”; Boccardo 1989, pp. 82–85 (quote on p. 83); Forti Grazzini in Lugano 1998, p. 158.
87. Parma in Mantua 2001, pp. 282–83.
88. Saint Petersburg 1956, p. 38.
89. Delmarcel in Antwerp 1994, pp. 43–48.

41.

## The Triumphal Chariot of Scipio

Preparatory drawing for the tapestry in Francis I's *Triumphs of Scipio*  
Giulio Romano, ca. 1531–32  
Pen and brown ink and pencil over brown chalk on paper  
42 x 52.3 cm (16½ x 20¾ in.)  
Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (P.II.246)

PROVENANCE: Acquired by Michael Sadler; 1947, purchased by the Ashmolean Museum.

REFERENCES: K. T. Parker 1956, pp. 118–19, no. 246, pl. LXII; Hartt 1958, vol. 1, no. 264, vol. 2, fig. 484; van Gelder 1965, p. 14, pl. 17; Bacou in Paris 1978, pp. 136–37, no. XXII 1; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 471; Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 380–81.

42.

## The Triumphal Chariot of Scipio

Modello for the tapestry in Francis I's *Triumphs of Scipio*  
Giulio Romano, ca. 1531–32  
Brown ink, brown wash, and white heightening on paper  
41.4 x 60.2 cm (16¼ x 23¾ in.)  
Département des Art Graphiques,  
Musée du Louvre, Paris (3536)

PROVENANCE: Before 1671, acquired by Everard Jabach; listed in the Jabach inventory as “School of Raphael,” no. 246; 1671, purchased by Louis XIV; 1797–1827, listed in the inventory of French royal collection by Morel d'Arleux, no. 1932; passed to collection of the French state, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins.

REFERENCES: D'Astier 1907, pp. 107–10; Hartt 1958, vol. 1, no. 265, vol. 2, pl. 479; Bacou in Paris 1978, pp. 137–38, no. XXII 2; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 471; Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 380–81; Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, pp. 134–35.

43.

## Oxen and Elephants

From a seven-piece set of the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio*  
Design by Giulio Romano, between 1523 and 1532  
Woven in Brussels, attributed to workshop of Balthazar van Vlierden, ca. 1542–44

490 x 816 cm (16 ft. 1 in. x 26 ft. 9¾ in.)  
7½–8 warps per cm  
Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid  
(TA-26/6, 10005922)

PROVENANCE: 1544, purchased by Mary of Hungary; 1555–58, recorded in inventory of Mary of Hungary and bequeathed, according to a marginal note, to her nephew Philip II of Spain; 1701–3, recorded in inventory of Charles II; 1788, recorded in inventory of Charles III; 1834, recorded in inventory of Fernando VII.

REFERENCES: Valencia de Don Juan 1903, vol. 2, pl. 95; d'Astier 1907, pp. 146–48; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 69–73; Jestaz in Paris 1978, pp. 15, 119, no. xv 2; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, p. 183; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 470 (with bibliog.); Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, p. 69; Buchanan 1992, pp. 380–82; van den Boogert in Utrecht and 's Hertogenbosch 1993, pp. 294–97; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, pp. 206–7, 234–36; Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, p. 129.

These two drawings and the tapestry relate to the *Triumphs of Scipio*, a ten-piece series designed by Giulio Romano to complement a group of twelve designs of the *Deeds of Scipio* that he had created in conjunction with Giovanni Francesco Penni. Although the circumstances in which the *Deeds* were conceived are unclear, the designs for the *Triumphs* were likely made with the artist's knowing that they would be sent to King Francis I of France. The designs were probably transported from Mantua to the French court by Francesco Primaticcio in the spring of 1532.<sup>1</sup>

Following the presentation to Francis I of three completed tapestries from the *Deeds* sequence in 1532, the French king commissioned the rest of that set as well as the complementary *Triumphs* from the Venetian merchant Marc Crétif. The enormous undertaking of weaving these tapestries was completed by 1535. Francis's set was destroyed at the order of the Directory in 1797, but the appearance of the twenty-two-piece set can be reconstructed on the basis of inventory descriptions, preparatory drawings by Giulio and his workshop, and later weavings of the design. Of these, the set purchased by Mary of Hungary in 1544, from which catalogue number 43 derives, is the earliest known reedition of the design.

For a detailed discussion of the artist, design, and what is known of the circumstances in which the *Deeds* and the *Triumphs* were conceived, see above, pages 341–49. The subject of the *Triumphs* is taken from Roman history as recorded by Livy, Polybius, and Appian and represents the victorious entry into Rome accorded to the general Scipio Africanus after his conquest of Carthage in the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.).

### Description of the Drawings

The two drawings, both assigned to Giulio Romano, are preparatory works for the tapestry the *Triumphal Chariot of Scipio*, which was the penultimate scene in the *Triumphs of Scipio*.<sup>2</sup> The drawings demonstrate the development of the design for this panel, providing a vivid impression of Giulio's creative process. The first (cat. no. 41), a rough compositional sketch in ink and pencil over brown chalk on paper, defines the basic elements of the scene: a procession of six horses and female figures moving from right to left and pulling Scipio's triumphal chariot, only minimally indicated. The hero, at the top right, wears a victor's crown of laurel leaves. Across the top of the sheet are four winged figures, three Victories carrying crowns and Fame with her trumpet. At the far left is a figure of Athena, goddess of war, wearing a helmet, her breast bared.

Building on this rough sketch, the Louvre sheet (cat. no. 42), in brown ink with brown wash and white highlights, offers a more complete and detailed composition. Here the chariot is richly ornamented, with carvings and draperies carefully represented. The lower right corner is filled with figures including a reclining nude, seen from the back, representing Rome's Tiber River, and the infant twins Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, with the she-wolf who nurtured them. At the left, an eagle, emblem of the Roman Republic, perches atop a plaque engraved SPQR (the Senate and People of Rome); behind is a landscape suggestive of the seven hills of Rome. With its prancing horses, expressive, modeled figures, and precise details arranged as a classical frieze, the sheet clearly reflects Giulio's style of the late 1520s and early 1530s.





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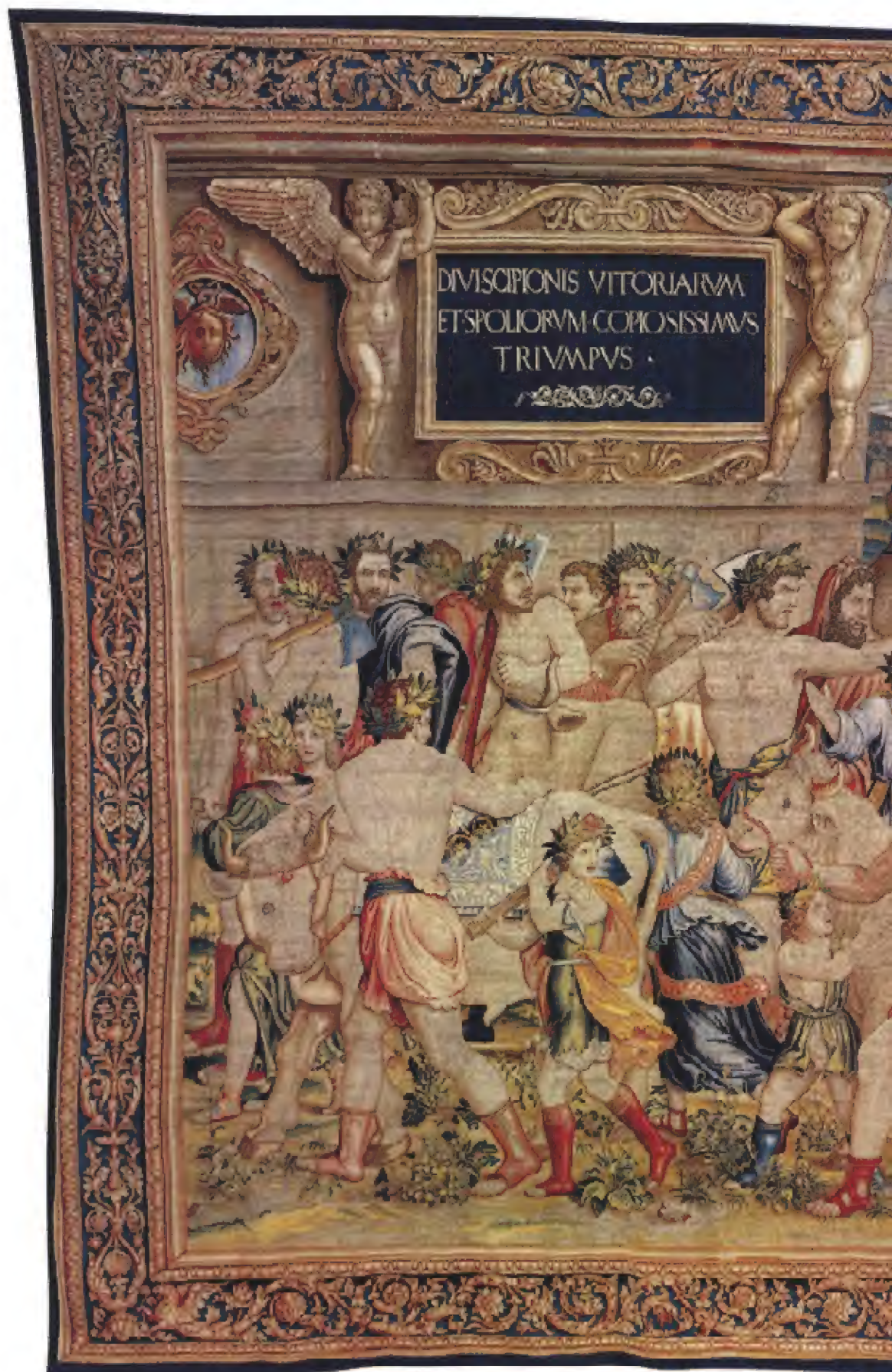
42



*Description of the Tapestry*

*Oxen and Elephants* (cat. no. 43) depicts a section in the elaborate triumphal procession of exotic and sacrificial animals, Roman soldiers, and captives of war that preceded Scipio's triumphal chariot. The scene follows Appian's description closely: "All who were in the procession wore crowns. Trumpeters led the advance and wagons laden with spoils. . . . White oxen came next and after them elephants followed."<sup>3</sup> At the left, Romans crowned with laurel leaves guide white oxen past a monumental edifice. The men carry axes for the sacrifice that is to come. Above, a stone plaque supported by carved putti carries the inscription *DIVI SCIPIONIS VICTORIARVM ET SPOLIORVM COPIOSISSIMVS TRIVMPVS* (A triumphal procession is given for Scipio's victories and abundant spoils). Lictors, announcing the general, march alongside the procession in sumptuous purple robes. At the center of the composition an elephant lifts its trunk and roars, causing great consternation among those around. The elephant's driver, a captured Numidian, is seated on a tapestry caparison decorated with grotesques; a lion, another captive of defeated Africa, reposes majestically behind him. The elephant is flanked by two camels. A second elephant closes the group at the right, its trunk waving as the turbaned Carthaginian driver shouts and gestures, draperies flying, in his attempt to control the animal. At the far right, a figure in a red robe carries a box of incense, again hinting at the ceremonies to come. In the distance a rolling landscape dotted with buildings suggests Rome with its seven hills. In the foreground, along the edge of the heavily trodden road, are sprigs of lush vegetation, with flowers and leaves exquisitely detailed. The scene is framed by trompe l'oeil carved moldings and by an elegant border decorated with a vine of gold acanthus leaves on a deep blue ground that corresponds to the border described on the lost set made for Francis I.<sup>4</sup>

The procession, moving from right to left is presented as a tightly compressed classical frieze, with the narrative unfolding in a rhythmic, linear fashion. The composition is reminiscent of Roman sarcophagi and public monuments such as sculpted figural reliefs on Trajan's Column, which were well known to Renaissance artists. This blend of antique forms and realistic presentation (for example, the vividly captured















Detail of cat. no. 43

reactions of those immediately in front of the bellowing elephant) perfectly demonstrates Giulio's ability to breathe fresh life into antique forms.

A preparatory drawing for *Oxen and Elephants* survives in the Louvre (fig. 168).<sup>5</sup> Often described as the *modello* for this design and generally attributed to Giulio, this drawing differs in a number of ways from the composition of the design as it is known from the Mary of Hungary panel (as do the *modelli* for other Giulio *Triumphs* scenes in relation to all known weavings). Although the *Oxen and Elephants* drawing contains many of the elements that

appear in the tapestry, it presents a much more condensed composition. The animals are packed close together, leaving no room for the landscape that appears in the background of the tapestry. The drawing also lacks various figures with which the composition of the tapestry is extended. Seeking to account for these divergences, d'Astier, assuming that Mary of Hungary's tapestry was a faithful reproduction of Francis I's lost weaving of this design, suggested that the Louvre drawing preceded a final *modello* by Giulio in which these modifications were effected.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Forti Grazzini, following Jestaz, suggested that the changes

were made by the artists who painted the cartoons in Brussels in 1532–33.<sup>7</sup> A possible explanation for the elongation may be provided by Adelson's suggestion that Francis intended the combined sequence of the *Deeds* and the *Triumphs* to hang in the long gallery at Fontainebleau. If this was the case, the elongation of the design may have been to accommodate the dimensions of this room.

In addition to the Louvre drawing, a cartoon for the *Oxen and Elephants* has also survived (State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg).<sup>8</sup> The relationship among the cartoon, Francis I's lost set, and Mary of Hungary's set remains unclear.



Fig. 168. *Oxen and Elephants*. Preparatory drawing for the tapestry, attributed to Giulio Romano, ca. 1532. Pen and brown ink, brown wash and white heightening on paper, 41.3 x 55.9 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

Although the cartoon is remarkably close in many aspects to the detail in both the *modello* and in Mary of Hungary's tapestry in Madrid, it also shows significant divergences from both. The cartoon differs from the *modello* in such areas as the addition of the richly decorated caparison over the central elephant and of the driver on the second elephant, changes that might be explained as elaborations of the design either in a subsequent preparatory drawing or, more probably, by the artists who made the cartoon. However, there are differences that are less readily explained. Most obviously, the cartoon lacks the cartouche and inscription at the left of the Louvre drawing and the Madrid tapestry. In addition, the figures in the foreground at the front of the procession (cartoon's right, tapestry's left) differ, and the cartoon has a short balustrade in front of the foremost figures that is lacking in both the Louvre drawing and the Madrid tapestry, as well as in all later seventeenth-century reweavings of the design.

The explanation for these divergences is unclear. That Francis I's *Oxen and Elephants* was woven from the Hermitage cartoon—as it now survives—seems to be ruled out on the basis of a seventeenth-century account that describes Francis's tapestry as including the inscribed plaque envisaged in the *modello* and appearing in Mary of Hungary's tapestry.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars have proposed that the Hermitage cartoon is a sixteenth-century copy developed either from the lost original cartoon or from the *modelli* created for the production of a now lost reedition of the design.<sup>10</sup> Alternatively, it is possible that the Hermitage cartoon is the original, that it was used for production of both Francis I's and Mary of Hungary's sets, and that it was subsequently extensively patched and repainted to take account of damage to the right-hand side. The cartoon currently hangs in a large glass-fronted case, so study is not easy, but it is to be hoped that future analysis may elucidate this issue.

#### Patron and Date

This tapestry is from a seven-piece set purchased by Mary of Hungary in 1544 from Erasmus Schets, the earliest documented reweaving of the original twenty-two-piece set made for Francis I.<sup>11</sup> Mary's abbreviated version of the series incorporated two scenes from the *Triumphs* and five of the *Deeds*. The set was made in Brussels as evidenced by the marks it carries. A document provides the probable identity of the workshop in which it was woven: it records a 1546 transaction between the Brussels weaver Balthazar van Vlierden, who had relocated from Brussels to Antwerp in 1544, and François Thonis, director of the Antwerp wine excise. According to this, van Vlierden sold to Thonis his share of twelve pieces of *Scipio* and eight pieces of the *Story of Tobias*, having previously sold his interest in another part of the group to Erasmus Schets. Thus it seems likely that Mary's set was also woven in van Vlierden's workshop.<sup>12</sup> Mary of Hungary's set bears two marks, of which one, barely legible, has been attributed to Erasmus Schets.<sup>13</sup> However, since the 1546 document shows that Schets made purchases from van Vlierden for tapestries that he did not commission, this attribution must remain in question. The second mark, published by d'Astier but no longer visible, is unidentified.<sup>14</sup>

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1. See above, pp. 343, 347–49.
2. Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 135.
3. Appian *Roman History* 8.9.66.
4. D'Astier 1907, pp. 54–55; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 470.
5. Jestaz in Paris 1978, pp. 115–16.
6. D'Astier 1907, p. 148.
7. Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 119; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, p. 236.
8. Inv. no. 6343; Paris 1978, pp. 118–19.
9. Jestaz and Bacou in *ibid.*, pp. 6, 119.
10. Jestaz in *ibid.*, p. 119; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 470; Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, p. 129.
11. Finot 1892, p. 243; Buchanan 1992, p. 382.
12. Donnet 1896, p. 281; Jestaz in Paris 1978, p. 15; Buchanan 1992, pp. 380–82.
13. Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 470.
14. D'Astier 1907, p. 146; Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, p. 69; Buchanan 1992, p. 380.



## Apollo with the Signs of the Zodiac

From a five-piece set of *Apollo and the Four Seasons*  
Design here attributed to an Italian artist, probably  
Perino del Vaga, ca. 1540–45  
Woven in Brussels, ca. 1545  
Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
394 x 585 cm (12 ft. 11 in. x 19 ft. 2¼ in.)  
7–9 warps per cm  
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg  
(T 15623)

PROVENANCE: 1885, acquired by Baron A. L. Stieglitz,  
Saint Petersburg; 1923, acquired by the State Hermitage  
Museum, Saint Petersburg.

REFERENCES: Saint Petersburg 1956, p. 38; Delmarcel  
in Antwerp 1994, pp. 41–48.

CONDITION: Good. All the colors are somewhat faded,  
and the gilt-metal-wrapped thread is tarnished.

This tapestry is one of a group of five tapestries of *Apollo and the Four Seasons*. The inspiration for this little-known and enigmatic set is drawn from the influential but perplexing Neoplatonic text the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* by Francesco Colonna, first published in Venice in 1499. When four pieces of the set (not including this one) were first exhibited in Antwerp in 1994, they were tentatively identified as the product of a Brussels workshop of about 1560. New research suggests that while the tapestries were almost certainly woven in Brussels, their design is closely related to work executed by Perino del Vaga in Genoa and Rome during the late 1530s and early 1540s and that the idiosyncratic iconography of the set may point toward a member of the Farnese family as patron in the mid-1540s. The *Apollo* tapestry and the other four, *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn*, and *Winter*, are remarkable for their vivid imagery and complex iconography. Indeed, the set represents a high point in the melding of Italian design and iconography and Netherlandish weaving in the mid-sixteenth century.

### Description

The tapestry depicts the sun god Apollo surrounded by the signs of the zodiac, set against a rich background of imaginative grotesques. The figure of Apollo is represented as an ideal

nude striding forward, swathed in red drapery. Delmarcel identified the source of the central images in the other four tapestries of the set, which depict the Seasons, as a group of wood engravings from the 1499 edition of Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.<sup>1</sup> The Apollo figure is also related to an illustration in Colonna's book; in both, the figure steps forward, arms outstretched, holding a bow in the left hand and an arrow in the right. Both figures also recall the antique sculpture the Apollo Belvedere, which was well known from the 1490s. In the tapestry, Apollo's divinity is suggested by an aura of carefully defined rays. At his lower right is a raven, identified by Ovid as "Apollo's bird."<sup>2</sup> At the god's lower left is a serpent, wounded with an arrow, probably a reference to the monstrous Python of classical literature that terrorized the earth in its beginnings and that was slain by one of Apollo's arrows.<sup>3</sup>

Signs of the zodiac—symbols of the heavenly stars, each in a blue field reminiscent of the evening sky—encircle the sun god. In both the tapestry and the wood engraving, Apollo is framed by a wreath of fruit and leaves, perhaps an allusion to nature and the earthly elements that are featured in the other four tapestries. This central medallion is surrounded by fantastic beasts arranged symmetrically against a deep red ground. Below is a pair of sphinxes, and above, a pair of griffins, their lions' bodies ending in curling fish tails. On either side of the medallion, against a dark blue ground, a tall balustraded column supports a many-breasted figure of Diana of Ephesus, symbol of abundance. In this guise, Diana, sister of Apollo, embodies the fecundity of nature and becomes a goddess of fertility, protector of children and childbirth. Antique representations of Diana of Ephesus were known in Renaissance Rome, inspiring a depiction by Raphael in the Vatican Loggia (1517–18).<sup>4</sup> Another image was installed in the Palazzo Farnese, where, under Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, it was located in the Stanza del Toro, leading to the garden; in a Farnese inventory of 1644 it was listed as "a torso of Mother Nature with many breasts."<sup>5</sup> At the

lower left and right of the tapestry, exotic mermaids and mermen reach up toward exuberantly scrolling acanthus vines, intertwined with playing putti.

The tapestries, as noted, are visually and iconographically linked to the 1499 edition of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. This influential book, written in a particular combination of Italian and Latin, is both a treatise on art and a narrative of the romance of Poliphilo and the nymph Polia, all of which takes place in a dream. Though the name of its author is not certain, a document of 1512 identified him as a Venetian Dominican friar, Francesco Colonna; this is generally accepted by scholars. The text presents Apollo by means of Poliphilo's description of a magnificent, jewel-encrusted chariot whose decorations incorporate a frieze illustrating the narrative of the recent and curious birth to a noblewoman of two eggs, one with a flame emerging from it and the other with two bright stars. Apollo has been called on to interpret the meaning of this birth. After describing the scenes, Poliphilo accompanies the nymph Polia and her companions in a triumphal procession in honor of Vertumnus and Pomona, arriving at an altar carved with depictions of the Four Seasons; in this context appear the illustrations on which the central images of the other four tapestries are based.

In Colonna's text, whose full meaning continues to elude literary scholars, the eggs may represent earthly love or passion (egg with flame) and heavenly or divine love (egg with two stars), reinforcing the text's theme of the nature of love. Apollo, employed as an oracle and interpreter in Colonna's text, was viewed in classical mythology not only as the god of poetry and music but, like the Muses, as a giver of inspiration. In the *Apollo* tapestry, as the symbol of enlightenment and creativity, he perhaps offers a counterpoint to the sensuous fertility symbolized by the figures of Diana of Ephesus that flank him. Apollo is also linked to the Roman emperor Augustus, patron of art and literature, who encouraged the cult of Apollo, erected a temple to him on the Palatine, and



chose Apollo as his special protector. The figure of Apollo thus evokes the spirit of Augustus and the golden age of art and literature that he supported.

Apollo can also be interpreted here as a metaphor of Christ. In medieval literature, Apollo, as son of Jupiter and god of light, became associated with Christ, and his myths became Christianized. For example, in the *Ovide moralisé*, a Christianized retelling of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* written in the early fourteenth century by an unknown author, Ovid's tale of Apollo slaying the Python is interpreted as an allegory of Christ overcoming the Devil.<sup>6</sup> The story of the raven is also interpreted in the *Ovide moralisé* as the bird representing Apollo's selfless "faithful servant," a metaphor for the followers of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

While the iconography of the tapestries, like that of Colonna's enigmatic text, remains to be analyzed in detail, the set evidently carries complex symbolic references to heaven and earth (Apollo and the zodiac or the Four Seasons), to time (the cycles of day and night or month and year), to love (sacred and profane), to religion (pagan classicism or Christianity), and even to creativity (art and nature) that reflect a highly developed program for a sophisticated patron who would have appreciated the complexity of its many allusions.

#### Designer

When the tapestry series was exhibited in 1994, Delmarcel, noting the high quality of design and execution, assigned the set to Brussels and suggested about 1560 as a possible date of production by analogy with the manufacture of a number of other sets with grotesque designs in this period.<sup>8</sup> However, the design of the *Apollo and the Four Seasons* set differs markedly from these later series, which were woven from designs by Netherlandish artists who had placed a decidedly Northern stamp on the grotesque forms they used. In contrast, the grotesques in this set are more in the spirit of the work of various Raphael-school artists of the late 1520s and 1530s, especially that of Giulio Romano, Giovanni da Udine, and Perino del Vaga. Many of the components of the design are particularly close to those in designs by Perino, done both during his sojourn in Genoa in the 1530s and, especially, in the 1540s after his return to Rome.

This link with Perino's work was mentioned in passing by Delmarcel, who cited the similarity











Detail of cat. no. 44



of the grotesques of playing putti to a print after Perino of 1532, without elaborating further on this theme.<sup>9</sup> Detailed examination of Perino's work reveals many other resonances. For example, a drawing of griffins and lions that appears to be designed by Perino for a fountain, executed in 1530–32 for the Palazzo Doria in Genoa, could also have served as a source for the griffins at the lower left of the *Summer* tapestry.<sup>10</sup> The scene of the Battle of the Nereids (inspired by a Mantegna engraving) at the lower left of the *Winter* tapestry is stylistically close to similar depictions in fresco and stucco designed by Perino about 1545 for the Sala Paolina in the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome.<sup>11</sup> In the *Autumn* tapestry (fig. 169), the lions that appear on the central frieze of the antique vase in the fore-

ground are strongly reminiscent of those in the Triumph of Bacchus design that Perino executed about 1543 for one of the incised crystal panels for a gold casket commissioned by Alessandro Farnese (Museo Capodimonte, Naples).<sup>12</sup> The figure of Apollo in the *Apollo* tapestry, with its idealized form, is reminiscent of a stucco representation of that god in the loggia of the Palazzo Doria, Genoa.<sup>13</sup> With its zodiacal frame, it also recalls the divine figures that appear in the *Story of Aeneas* tapestries designed by Perino for Andrea I Doria during the early to mid-1530s.<sup>14</sup> An attribution of the design of the *Apollo and the Four Seasons* set to Perino is further supported by a consideration of the iconography and patron for whom the set may have been made.

#### Patron

The earliest record of a set of tapestries similar to that in the Hermitage is found in an inventory of tapestries and textiles in the French crown collection (most of which had belonged to Francis I), which was taken in 1551 after the death of the royal tapissier, Guillaume Moynier. This describes "five large tapestries of fine work, in the manner of Brussels, enhanced with cyprus gold and silk, representing the Planets or seasons of the year."<sup>15</sup> Although this description is not adequate to identify the French royal set as a weaving of the present design, an inventory of the French royal collection made under Louis XIV in 1675 provides further information. Under the title *Apollo and the Four Seasons*, the set is described as woven in wool and silk, as of



Fig. 169. *Autumn* from *Apollo and the Four Seasons*. Tapestry probably designed by Perino del Vaga, woven in Brussels, ca. 1545. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 393 x 585 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Brussels manufacture, and as from a design by Giulio Romano, representing Apollo and the Four Seasons in a roundel in the center of each piece with various grotesques. The border was described as having a red ground with a continuous ribbon ornament enclosing bouquets of flowers, with red roses in squares in the corners.<sup>16</sup> No mention is made of gold thread in this later description, but that may be because gold was sparingly used (as is also the case in cat. no. 44, in which gold is used only in the central roundel). The dimensions in the 1675 inventory are the same as those given for the set in the 1551 inventory; allowing for a certain amount of shrinkage along the length of the warp and stretching in the height of the tapestry, the dimensions also conform to those of the extant tapestries in the Hermitage. While it is conceivable that the set listed in the French royal inventories is the same as the one at the Hermitage, the description of the roses in the corners as red calls this identification into question. The roses in the Hermitage tapestries are orange, a disparity possibly caused by the light in which Louis XIV's tapissier inspected the tapestries, or by fading in the Hermitage tapestry.

Although the set recorded in the French royal collection may have been the first and only weaving of this design, circumstantial evidence suggests that the original patron of the design is to be found elsewhere. As noted, the tapestries are stylistically close to the vocabulary utilized by Perino in Genoa in the 1530s and especially in Rome following his return from Genoa in 1539, when his principal patrons were Pope Paul III and Paul's grandson and namesake, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. Paul's accession as pope in 1534 was lauded by contemporaries as a new golden age for artistic patronage after the lean years following the Sack of Rome.<sup>17</sup> As a youth, he had frequented the humanist court of Lorenzo il Magnifico in Florence; as pope, in addition to numerous architectural projects, Paul oversaw Michelangelo's completion of the *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel in 1542 and subsequently commissioned Perino to design a tapestry *spalliera* to hang below (see fig. 167); he also commissioned Perino to paint the ceiling of the Sala Regia in the Vatican and to decorate the new papal apartments at the Castel Sant'Angelo, including the iconographically complex Sala Paolina and the decorative Sala di Apollo, where, from 1545,

Perino executed an elaborate program of frescoes and stuccowork.

The prime motivator behind much of Paul's artistic patronage was his grandson. Indeed, Vasari tells us that it was Alessandro Farnese who first brought Perino to Paul's attention.<sup>18</sup> From the early 1540s, Alessandro was the most important private art patron in mid-sixteenth-century Rome. Sophisticated and cultured, the cardinal surrounded himself with intellectuals, including the humanist bishop Paolo Giovio and Annibale Caro, both of whom served as his artistic advisers. He also employed artists such as Francesco Salviati and Vasari for complex secular and religious projects. It was Cardinal Farnese who prompted Vasari to compile his *Vite*, or lives of the artists. His first commission for Perino in the late 1530s was for designs for crystals to decorate a set of candlesticks, which were engraved by Giovanni Bernardi in 1539.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, according to Vasari, Cardinal Farnese "began to give [Perino] an allowance and to make use of him in many works."<sup>20</sup>

Perino's extensive and wide-ranging work for the Farnese is of particular note because the *Autumn* tapestry in the Hermitage set carries two emblems, one with a winged thunderbolt and the other with two facing dolphins (fig. 169). The first emblem was developed by Giovio for Pope Paul III; it was described and illustrated in the 1574 edition of Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresa*, with the note that Paul adopted the emblem in conjunction with his efforts to quell religious rebellion in Germany. Giovio did not provide details, but he was probably referring to the period about 1545 when Paul supported Charles V's forays into Germany with troops and funds (in exchange for the right to Parma and Piacenza for his son Pierluigi).<sup>21</sup> Giovio explained the winged thunderbolt as the weapon with which "Jupiter armed himself when he had to castigate the arrogance of men of little faith, as at the time of the Giants. . . . The thunderbolt signifies that Paul is Jupiter."<sup>22</sup> The winged thunderbolt was also adopted by Paul's grandson Cardinal Farnese, and became, according to the cardinal's secretary, Annibale Caro, his primary emblem. Caro, who served as an artistic adviser and wrote the program for the elaborate decoration executed at the Villa Farnese at Caprarola from 1560, explained in a letter of 1563 the various emblems that appeared at Caprarola. These included the winged thunder-

bolt, which, he said, meant "many things, but for my illustrious Lord [Cardinal Farnese], I believe it represented the power of the Pope whom he served, as the thunderbolt was dedicated to Jupiter, which signified the Pope."<sup>23</sup> Dolphins, singly or paired, were also used by members of the Farnese family, including Paul III and Cardinal Farnese.<sup>24</sup> Both emblems, according to Caro, were inspired by Imperial Rome, particularly by the coins of Augustus on which they were based.<sup>25</sup>

Caro also provided a potential link between Cardinal Farnese and Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. According to Caro's letter written in 1563, he used this text to develop an emblem for the cardinal's nephew Alessandro, son of Margaret of Parma: "The two last [emblems] I made for Madame [Margaret of Parma] for the Prince of Parma [Alessandro Farnese]; they are of a horse with wings, and of an egg from which emerge two stars." He did not, unfortunately, explain the significance of these elements.<sup>26</sup>

Although the possibility that the design of the *Apollo and the Four Seasons* set was developed for a member of the Farnese family, whether for Cardinal Alessandro or Pope Paul, requires further investigation, the idiosyncratic components of the design certainly suggest that it may thus have had particular resonance for its patron. And if Alessandro or Paul was indeed the patron, then the figure of Apollo may have had additional significance, as a metaphor not only of Christ but also for the pope himself, the medium of Divine Love to the world.

#### *Place and Date of Manufacture*

Delmarcel has suggested Brussels as the place of manufacture for the set, as noted, because of the high quality of the weaving. One of the distinguishing features of tapestry patronage by the Farnese, as Bertini has pointed out, is that while the family assembled one of the most important collections of tapestries in Italy during the sixteenth century, it did not establish its own manufactory, as did the Este, the Gonzaga, and the Medici families. Instead the Farnese commissioned works almost exclusively from the best Netherlandish workshops.<sup>27</sup> Though little documentation exists on Farnese acquisitions during the 1540s, a letter of 1540 from Pier Luigi Farnese, Paul III's son, to Giovanni Poggi, his agent in Brussels, suggests that by



that time a relationship with at least one of the leading Brussels merchant-weavers was well established. Pierluigi referred to the merchant and producer “Messer Giovanni van Aelst” as “a close friend of the house [of Farnese] who would be happy to execute all that was asked of him.”<sup>28</sup>

This Giovanni was presumably related to the well-known merchant-weavers Pieter van Edingen, called van Aelst (ca. 1450–1533), and his son of the same name (fl. 1509–55). While Pierluigi Farnese’s 1540 letter has been associated with a series designed by Salviati of the *Life of Alexander*, of which one tapestry is extant (fig. 120), there can be no question that if the *Apollo and Four Seasons* set was conceived and woven for a member of the Farnese family, production must have been arranged and executed through a similar channel by one of the leading Brussels workshops. The presence of a duplicate set of this design in the French royal collection by 1551 suggests that the design must have been conceived several years before. The close stylistic links to Perino’s work of the early to mid-1540s and the inclusion of an *impresa* in the *Autumn* tapestry that Paul III may have adopted officially in the

mid-1540s suggest that the design should be dated between 1540 and 1545.

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1. Delmarcel in Antwerp 1994, pp. 43–48; Colonna 1980, pp. 186–88; Colonna 1999, pp. 192–94.
2. Ovid 1955, p. 45.
3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Bober and Rubinstein 1986, p. 87.
5. Vincent in *Palais Farnèse* 1980–81, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 345. “Un torso d’une Madre Natura con più mammelle”; Jestaz in ibid., vol. 3, p. 189.
6. “Mes Phebus, dieus de sapience / Solaus et lumiere du monde / C’est Christus, ou tous biens ha bonde, / au dyable se combati”; *Ovide moralisé* 1915–38, vol. 1, p. 118.
7. Ibid., pp. 168, 225–27.
8. Delmarcel in Antwerp 1994, pp. 43–44.
9. Ibid., p. 43; New York 1981, p. 50.
10. Mantua 2001, p. 206.
11. Rome 1981, vol. 2, pp. 104–17, 172–77.
12. Parma in Mantua 2001, pp. 302–4.
13. Boccardo 1989, p. 141.
14. Davidson 1990.
15. “[C]inq grans *tappiz* de fine tapisserie de marche, façon de Bruxelles, rehaussées d’or de chippe et soye, où sont figurées les *Planetes ou saisons de l’an*”; Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, p. 267.
16. Guiffrey 1885–86, vol. 1, p. 340, no. 48.
17. Robertson 1992, p. 15.
18. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 622.
19. Robertson 1992, p. 37.
20. “[I]l reverendissimo cardinal Farnese gli cominci-asse a dar provizione e servirsene in molte cose”; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, p. 622; translation, 1996 ed., vol. 2, p. 179.
21. Pastoreau in *Palais Farnèse* 1980–81, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 448.
22. “[I]l fulmine trifulco, ch’è la vera arme di Giove quando vuol castigare l’arroganza e poco religione de gli uomini, come fece al tempo de’ Giganti”; Giovo 1574 (1979 ed.), p. 137.
23. “Significa più cose, ma portato in quel tempo da S.S. Ill.ma credo che significasse la potestà che ‘l Papa la diede del governo, per essere il fulmine dedicato a Giove, il quale significa il Papa”; Caro 1957–61, letter 680, vol. 3, p. 144.
24. Pastoreau in *Palais Farnèse* 1980–81, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 442, 445.
25. Caro 1957–61, letter 680, vol. 3, p. 144.
26. “Le due ultime del cavallino che va a pigliar l’ale, e de l’ovo con le due stelle mi fece far Madama [Margherita d’Austria] peril Principe di Parma [Alessandro Farnese]”; ibid., letter 680, vol. 3, p. 146.
27. Bertini in *Tapiserie au XVIIIe siècle* 1999, p. 27.
28. “Et potrà parlarne co’ questo Messer Giovanni van Aelst, al quale se scrive l’allegata, che, per esser persona amorevole della casa, eseguirà volentieri tutto quello la Signoria Vostra li ordinerà in questo caso”; Colorno 1998, app. 1.







## Netherlandish Designers, 1530-60

Fueled by the enormous sums of money that contemporary patrons were channeling into tapestry commissions and purchases, the Brussels industry enjoyed a period of extraordinary expansion and prosperity during the second third of the sixteenth century. With a sizable proportion of the town population involved in this production in one way or another, the leading workshops were able to turn out an unprecedented volume of high-quality tapestries with remarkable rapidity. This activity required a steady stream of new designs, and although we know relatively little about the process of cartoon manufacture, it is clear that during the 1530s there must have been dozens of artists in Brussels engaged in the preparation of tapestry cartoons from designs by the leading artists of the day. From the early 1540s, if not before, a similar situation may have existed in Antwerp. It was in these circumstances that a second generation of Netherlandish designers came into prominence, working with the elements Bernaert van Orley had drawn from the northern European and Italian traditions, each artist bringing a particular contribution to the synthesis.

### PIETER COECKE VAN AELST

The first artist from van Orley's circle to achieve independent stature as a tapestry designer was Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502–1550).<sup>1</sup> Although his life is poorly documented, the main outlines of his career can be established on the basis of the few extant records. He was born in Aalst, some fifteen miles northwest of Brussels; Karel van Mander tells us that Coecke served his apprenticeship with van Orley and that he made a long trip to Italy, where he studied the art, sculpture, and buildings of Rome. The style of Coecke's early work and his subsequent activity as a tapestry designer provide circumstantial evidence for the first assertion, while his lifelong fascination with classical art and architecture, as attested by the paintings and designs he produced, as well as by architectural treatises he translated during the 1540s, support the second. If van Mander is correct, we might posit an apprenticeship with van Orley in the late 1510s and a trip to Italy in the early 1520s.<sup>2</sup> By 1526 Coecke was employed in Antwerp, probably in the workshop of Jan van Doornicke, to whose daughter he was married and

by whom he already had two children. Van Doornicke died in 1527, and as Coecke was listed as a "Franc-Maitre" in the Liggeren (guild register) of Antwerp in this year (on the occasion of taking on an apprentice), it seems likely that he took over his father-in-law's workshop. His name appears in the registers again in 1529, 1539, and 1544, when he accepted new apprentices, and in 1537 he was named a "Doyen" of the guild.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that Coecke continued to maintain very close links with the Brussels tapestry community throughout this period, whether directly or via the Antwerp merchants who funded so much of the Brussels industry.

A variety of activities related to tapestry making have been ascribed to Coecke during the 1520s, of which roles in the execution of the *Scuola nuova* (*Life of Christ*), *Battle of Pavia*, and *Hunts of Maximilian* cartoons, although unproven, are the most plausible.<sup>4</sup> That he did have considerable experience in tapestry design and cartoon production by the early 1530s is confirmed by evidence of his first certain connection to the tapestry trade. According to a brief account of 1572 by Georg Braun and a more detailed one by van Mander, Coecke traveled to Turkey to negotiate, so van Mander tells us, the sale of tapestries to the sultan Süleyman the Magnificent on behalf of the Dermoyen tapestry merchants—an enterprise that foundered because of the Muslim interdiction against the representation of human and animal figures in art.<sup>5</sup> Van Mander's account is substantiated by the testimony of two contracts drawn up in 1533 between Willem Dermoyen on one side, and the Augsburg merchant Jakob Rehlinger and his Antwerp associate Pieter van der Walle on the other. These agreements gave Rehlinger and van der Walle an option on two tapestry sets, one a duplicate of the *Battle of Pavia*, the other a duplicate of the *Hunts of Maximilian*, sample pieces of which they intended to convey to Constantinople to show to the sultan.<sup>6</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that Coecke must have been among the party that conveyed the tapestries to the sultan and that he would not have been included unless he was a voice of some authority in this medium. His relationship with Rehlinger is attested by the fact that the merchant helped him with the translation for the German edition of Sebastiano Serlio's fourth book on architectural orders, published in 1542. Although the intended sale to Süleyman came to nothing,



Fig. 171. *The Martyrdom of Paul*. Fragment of a cartoon for the tapestry from the *Story of Saint Paul* by Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1529–30. Chalk and washes of dilute body color on paper, 342 x 384 cm. Musée de la Ville, Brussels

Coecke's second wife, Mayken Verhulst, was to publish a series of engravings in 1553 (three years after her husband's death), titled the *Customs and Fashions of the Turks* (*Moeurs et fachons des turcs*), which must have been based on detailed drawings he made during this trip (see fig. 178).<sup>7</sup> On the basis of the format and style of these drawings it has been suggested, quite plausibly, that they may have been conceived as a series of tapestry designs. There is, however, no certain evidence that such a set was ever woven.<sup>8</sup>

Coecke must have been back in the Low Countries by 1534, by which time he had already achieved considerable status as an independent artist. This is attested by the inscription *Peintre de l'Empereur* that appeared on the base of the *Giant of Antwerp*, a sculpture he conceived in 1534 (the sculpture together with the inscription is recorded in an engraving of 1665 by Gilles Hendricx).<sup>9</sup> Modern claims that he accompanied Charles V to Tunis appear to be unfounded.<sup>10</sup> Archival documents reveal his activity as a glass designer in 1536, 1537, and 1540, while the large number of paintings that Marlier has associated with his style demonstrate that by these years he must have been directing a sizable shop that produced a considerable volume of repetitive work with limited participation on his part.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, like van Orley, Coecke seems to have focused his principal creative attention on tapestry design

during the 1530s, and it is in the preparatory drawings that he executed for this medium that we find him at his most ambitious and innovative. Although no record of purchase links his name to any series of this period, Marlier was able to lay the foundations for analysis of Coecke's tapestry oeuvre by collating a number of groups of designs largely on the basis of stylistic affinity. His work was complemented by a monographic exhibition organized at Schloss Halbturn in 1981 that focused on three design series that can be attributed to Coecke with some certainty.<sup>12</sup>

The earliest of these was probably the *Story of Saint Paul* (cat. nos. 45, 46), of which nine subjects are extant in various complete and partial sets. Preparatory sketches and *modelli* for seven of the designs, as well as one large cartoon fragment (fig. 171) and two smaller pieces (British Museum), are also known for the sequence. The series was evidently conceived under the influence of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles*, with which it shares three subjects in common. Yet Coecke's debt to Raphael's compositions, figures, costumes, and architectural settings has been subsumed within a distinctive personal style that was to characterize the Netherlandish artist's work throughout the 1530s. Following a traditional model that van Orley revitalized in his 1524 *Foundation of Rome* designs and later developed in his *Story of Jacob* series, Coecke's *Saint Paul* compositions



place the principal drama of each scene in the center of a wide panel, with subsidiary narratives appearing in the left and right backgrounds, in some cases divided from the main action by architectural components. Another device that seems to derive from van Orley, in this instance from his *Last Supper* (cat. no. 30) design, is the use of a high viewpoint to increase the drama of each scene. The intensity of effect is sometimes enhanced by presenting the principal image at an oblique angle, an innovation that was wholly Coecke's in terms of its application to tapestry design. And the emotional impact is further heightened by the contrapposto of many of the figures, swirling compositions, and dramatic atmospherics.

The date of the *Saint Paul* series and the circumstances in which it was conceived are unknown, but it has generally been attributed to the period immediately after Coecke's return from Constantinople, largely on the basis of the pseudo-Eastern details within the scenes.<sup>13</sup> A renewed consideration of the evidence confirms, however, that a set of seven *Saint Paul* tapestries purchased by Francis I in January 1533 was almost certainly woven from the Coecke designs, which indicates a conception date of about 1529–30 (see cat. nos. 45, 46). The Eastern details are generalized, suggesting that they were inspired not by direct experience of the artist's trip (which presumably had not yet taken place), but secondhand, through other works of art. If correct, this early dating establishes a new significance for the *Saint Paul* series, both within Coecke's personal oeuvre and in the broader context of Brussels tapestry design. Considered in that general context, it must be judged one of the most innovative and groundbreaking Netherlandish designs of the period; indeed, along with van Orley's *Story of Jacob* series, it helped define the narrative and compositional mode that was to be widely followed for biblical and historical subjects over the next thirty years.

The next designs that can be attributed to Coecke without doubt are those of a seven-piece series of the *Seven Deadly Sins*. The earliest certainly documented weaving (but not necessarily the first produced) was that purchased by Mary of Hungary in 1544, of which four pieces survive in the Spanish royal collection (see cat. no. 47). Designs of other pieces are reflected in a weaving that came to the Habsburg collection after the execution of Lamoral, count of Egmont, the original owner, in 1568 (of which six pieces survive), and another complete early weaving, extant in the Austrian state collection. Following the format of the earlier *Triumphs of Petrarch* (see cat. no. 13), this group represents a series of triumphal chariots, each carrying the personification of the Sin in question, surrounded by appropriate types and antitypes from mythology and history. The designs are highly animated, with figures twisting and turning in every direction, further enlivened

by atmospheric effects and an imaginative spectrum of monsters and grotesque figures. There is no question that they are by Coecke because a contemporary nine-page guide prepared for the weaver, Willem de Pannemaker, has survived (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid). This describes the iconography of the designs in great detail and states that their author was "maistre pierre van aelst peintre d'anvers."<sup>14</sup> A conception date of 1537 has generally been assumed on the basis of a date inscribed on one of three drawings that relate to the designs of the series (fig. 172). However, this supposition is cast in doubt as only one of these appears to be an original *modello*, while the dated work and the third sheet seem to be workshop copies. A 1537 conception is placed in further question by the fact that Henry VIII may have acquired a set of this design in the period between September 1535 and September 1536 (see cat. no. 47). Although the evidence pertaining to Henry's set is not certain, it raises the possibility that the whole series was conceived several years earlier than previously thought, either just before or just after Coecke's trip to Constantinople in the early 1530s. Moreover, the generic nature of the Eastern elements in the *Deadly Sins* (which include a portrait of Süleyman the Magnificent), like those of the *Saint Paul* series, indicate that they were derived from contemporary prints, rather than from eyewitness experience.

The third of the design series that can be ascribed to Coecke with some certainty is the *Story of Joshua*, whose appearance is



Fig. 172. *Triumph of Pride*. Pieter Coecke van Aelst, 1537. Pen, ink, and wash on paper, 21.1 x 21.1 cm. Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt



Fig. 173. *The Crossing of the River Jordan* from the *Story of Joshua*. Tapestry designed by Pieter Coecke van Aelst, woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, ca. 1544. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 448 x 830 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

known from an eight-piece set carrying a mark attributed to the Dermoyen workshop that survives in Vienna (fig. 173).<sup>15</sup> This series depicts the principal events of the patriarch's life as narrated in the Book of Joshua (chaps. 1–24). The earliest documented group is an eight-piece set woven with silk and gold that was sold to Francis I in 1538 by the Antwerp merchant Emmanuel Riccio. Another of the same number and quality (probably the set now in Vienna) was bought by Mary of Hungary in 1544, while a third set with two additional designs by Coecke was acquired by Henry VIII before 1547.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of the delivery date of Francis I's set, the date of conception can be assumed to be about 1535–36. The attribution of the design to Coecke, whose authorship is readily apparent in its style, is supported by three related drawings, one of which carries Coecke's monogram. These appear to show either preliminary abandoned designs for the series or later reworkings of the theme.<sup>17</sup> As Bauer and Delmarcel have noted, the frenetic compositions of the battle scenes and the postures and costumes of the figures in the executed tapestries are clearly inspired by, and even directly quoted from, those of the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio* by Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano (see pp. 341–49, and cat. nos. 41–43).<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the putti in the borders are based on

and in some cases copied from those in the Giovanni da Udine and Tommaso Vincidor collaboration, the *Giochi di putti*.

The circumstances in which the *Saint Paul*, *Deadly Sins*, and *Joshua* designs and cartoons were made are uncertain; however, the manner in which Henry VIII, Francis I, and Mary of Hungary appear to have acquired weavings suggests that the cartoons may have been undertaken as speculative ventures at the behest of the Antwerp merchants who played such an important role in the funding and marketing of high-quality Brussels production during the 1530s and 1540s. The commercial success of these designs is attested by the number of duplicates that were woven during these decades, and their popularity clearly indicates that Coecke must have been ranked as one of the leading tapestry designers in the Low Countries at the end of the 1530s. It is therefore somewhat perplexing that no further tapestry series are firmly ascribed to Coecke, although his career was to continue until his premature death in 1550 and coincided with the golden age of Netherlandish tapestry production. Did he really abandon tapestry design after 1537?

Although Marlier considered a number of tapestry-design series in his monograph on Coecke, the question has largely been ignored in recent studies of the artist, which generally leap from his work





Fig. 174. *The Assassination of Caesar* from the *Story of Julius Caesar*. Tapestry design here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, woven in Brussels, ca. 1549. Wool and silk, 495 x 710 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

as a tapestry designer during the 1530s to his activity as a publisher. From 1539 he is known to have devoted himself to the task of translating a series of Italian architectural treatises, an enterprise that van Mander hailed for having “brought the light [of knowledge] into our Netherlands and redirected the lost art of architecture to the right direction.”<sup>19</sup> In 1539 Coecke published a synthesis of Vitruvius’s work concerning the classical orders and a translation of Serlio’s fourth book (based on the original published two years earlier in Venice). A German translation was published in 1542 and a French edition in 1545. Coecke’s Flemish translation of Serlio’s third book followed in 1546, a new Flemish translation of the fourth book in 1549, and in 1550 the French translation of the third book appeared. In 1555, after Coecke’s death, his wife published Flemish editions of the first, second, and fourth books.<sup>20</sup> While it is true that these projects must have occupied a considerable amount of time, they would not have been all consuming. Moreover, it is doubtful that Coecke would have abandoned one of the most profitable and prestigious aspects of his profession for what was effectively a hobby.

In fact, evidence that he did continue to play a substantial role in tapestry design can be deduced from various quarters. First, a

drawing of a previously unknown subject (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich), which Marlier correctly published as an example of Coecke’s later style, has recently been identified as a preparatory sketch for a series devoted to the *Story of Julius Caesar*. The editio princeps of the design was supplied to Henry VIII in 1543–44, suggesting a conception date in the early 1540s.<sup>21</sup> Although Henry’s set vanished in the nineteenth century, the appearance of the series can be reconstructed on the basis of a single scene, the *Assassination of Caesar* (fig. 174), from a set acquired by Pope Julius III in 1555. Dated 1549 (presumably indicating the year of the weaving), this tapestry provides the connecting link to a fragment deriving from one of the original cartoons (fig. 175), and to a number of second-generation weavings, in which certain compositions and figure types are clearly in Coecke’s distinctive style. These offer an impression, albeit simplified, of the original designs, although judgments about their style and quality must be very guarded in view of the loss of all but one of the first-generation works. It is to be noted, however, that the figures in the *Assassination of Caesar* lack the highly individualized character of those in earlier Coecke designs, perhaps indicating that the master was responsible for only the *modelli* for the set and that the cartoons were executed largely by assistants.

The *Caesar* series is close in style to another series whose authorship is also undocumented, the *Story of Abraham*. The first weaving of the *Abraham* design was probably that acquired by Henry VIII at the same time he acquired his *Caesar* set, that is, sometime between September 1543 and September 1544 (see cat. no. 48). Allowing two and a half to three years for the preparation of the designs and cartoons and the weaving of the tapestries, this suggests a date of conception of about 1540–41, if not earlier. The possibility that Coecke was also responsible for the *modelli* of that series, perhaps in part after initial sketches by van Orley, is discussed below in the context of the catalogue entry.

That Coecke remained active as a tapestry designer in the 1540s is also attested by the fact that he was listed first among a group of artists awarded annual incomes in 1541–42 by the Antwerp magistrates for establishing new industries in the city and taking local youths as apprentices. Coecke was cited as a painter and designer of cartoons.<sup>22</sup> Marlier suggested that this showed that the artist's activity as a cartoonist must have been focused in Brussels during the 1530s, and that he established a workshop in Antwerp at the

start of the 1540s.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, the award coincides, first, with a time of increased competition in the tapestry industry between Antwerp and Brussels and, second, with the period in which Michiel Coxcie appears to have been coming to prominence as a tapestry designer in Brussels. Schneeberg-Perelman has proposed that the Antwerp authorities may have made this payment to discourage Coecke from taking an appointment as designer of cartoons to Brussels following van Orley's death in 1541.<sup>24</sup> Whether or not this was so, the pension certainly seems to imply that Coecke's activity as a tapestry designer was continuing, and this exhibition provides a useful opportunity to reopen the debate about what this contribution may have entailed.

Part of the problem confronted in resolving this debate is that there is a dichotomy between Coecke's early work and his late work. The *Saint Paul*, *Deadly Sins*, and *Joshua* series constitute a coherent group of designs with a very distinctive style. Typified by moments of high drama, featuring protagonists in violent action and extreme contrapposto, these designs project an excitement that is often accentuated by unusual viewpoints, complex compositions, dramatic atmospheric effects, and elaborate architectural settings. Yet the characteristic approach of these examples probably leads us astray when we attempt to assess the character of Coecke's later tapestry designs. This is the case because, as autograph examples in other media demonstrate, his later work incorporates figures of greater refinement and passages of calmer linear rhythms, although they do not entirely abandon the explosive compositions of former days. Thus the touchstones for identification of Coecke's later tapestry designs are a triptych in Lisbon (fig. 176) that can be identified with one purchased in Antwerp by a Portuguese patron in 1584, when it was firmly attributed to Coecke; a drawing showing the *Triumph of Mordecai* (fig. 177), evidently the *modello* for a tapestry of which a woven example was extant in the early twentieth century (location unknown); and the woodcuts for the *Customs and Fashions of the Turks* (see fig. 178), whose style contrasts markedly with that of the tapestries of the mid-1530s, indicating that the designs were only worked up into the form in which they were printed in the mid-1540s.<sup>25</sup>

The value of these comparative works lies in the evidence they provide of a repertoire of figures and compositional devices that are more elegant and classical than those of the earlier tapestry designs; indeed, this is a repertoire that appears in a number of the most poetic and beautiful of the tapestry series conceived during the 1540s. These are the so-called *Poesia*, depicting scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, of which a partial set, supplied to Philip II in 1556, survives in the Spanish royal collection (see cat. no. 49); the *Vertumnus and Pomona* series of which one set was purchased by



Fig. 175. Fragment from a cartoon of the *Reunion of Pompey and Cornelia* from the *Story of Julius Caesar*, after a design here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1540. Chalk and body color on paper, 44.8 x 35 cm. Private collection, Brussels





Fig. 176. *The Descent from the Cross, the Descent into Limbo, and the Resurrection*. Triptych by Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1545–50. Oil on panel, 262 x 172 (central panel), 274 x 84 cm (wings). Museu Nacional de Arte Antigua, Lisbon

Mary of Hungary before 1548 and three high-quality sets survive in Spain, Vienna, and Portugal (see fig. 182);<sup>26</sup> and a *Story of the Creation* series of which a weaving was purchased by Cosimo de' Medici in 1551 (Accademia, Florence; see fig. 122).<sup>27</sup> While the landscapes of these series were unquestionably executed by cartoonists who specialized in this genre, the figures are remarkably similar to those in the Lisbon triptych, the *Triumph of Mordecai*, and the *Customs and Fashions of the Turks*. Although Marlier recognized the link, he grouped these tapestries among the panels he considered of dubious authorship. His reservations about their attribution to Coecke were based partly on comparison with the designs from the 1530s that can certainly be ascribed to him and partly on the similarity between their figures and ones that appear in the *Conquest of Tunis* tapestries, for which Jan Vermeyen was principally responsible.<sup>28</sup> We must wonder if he would have made

the same decision today, in light of modern understanding of the collaborative process often involved in cartoon production. Since Marlier's monograph on Coecke was published, new evidence has emerged that Coecke was also involved in the production of some of the *Tunis* cartoons. As Coecke's authorship of the three series in question hinges on a correct interpretation of this information, it is necessary to depart from a chronological consideration of his work at this point to consider the genesis of the *Tunis* cartoons.

#### JAN VERMEYEN AND THE CONQUEST OF TUNIS

Little is known of the early career of Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen (ca. 1500–ca. 1559). Van Mander tells us that he was born in Beverwijk, and in light of stylistic traits, his most recent biographer, Horn, has suggested that he may have served his apprenticeship in the Northern Netherlands. This apprenticeship, Horn believes, possibly

Fig. 177. *The Triumph of Mordecai*. Modello for a tapestry by Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1545. Pen and ink and wash on paper, 16.9 x 28 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris



took place in Haarlem under Cornelis Willemsz or in the Amsterdam establishment of Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, perhaps followed by a spell in van Orley's studio, before he set up his own workshop in Mechelen in 1525.<sup>29</sup> In 1525 he entered the service of Margaret of Austria, for whom he worked primarily as a court portraitist, traveling with her to Cambrai in 1529 and to Augsburg and Innsbruck in 1530. According to a bill presented after Margaret's death in 1530, by that date Vermeyen had already executed the portraits of nineteen members of the imperial family, including Charles V.<sup>30</sup> The style of his early work reflects the influence of

Jan Gossart with whom he may have trained in his formative years, and with Jan van Scorel with whom, van Mander tells us, he maintained personal and commercial links. Following Margaret of Austria's death, Vermeyen's services were retained by Mary of Hungary, for whom he painted portraits and religious subjects. By June 1534 Vermeyen had joined Charles V in Spain, from whence, in April 1535, he accompanied the emperor on the crusade to Tunis. Whether he had been summoned specifically for this task is unclear; however, the fact that he had been in Spain for eight months before Charles announced his plans suggests that



Fig. 178. *Procession of Sultan Süleyman through the Atmeidan* (detail of right side) from the *Customs and Fashions of the Turks*. Pieter Coecke van Aelst, 1553. Woodcut, 29.5 x 83.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928 (28.85.7a, b)



he joined the crusade simply because he was in the emperor's entourage when it was initiated.<sup>31</sup> During the campaign he must have made hundreds of sketches of the principal events, along with records of the topography and portraits of the protagonists. None of these has survived, but that they existed is attested by the wealth of observed detail in the cartoons commemorating the campaign that Vermeyen prepared during the late 1540s. Whether these lost drawings were made with a view to a series of tapestries is uncertain. They may rather have been intended as the basis for engravings depicting the crusade. Vermeyen certainly produced a number of such drawings for engravings in the late 1530s and early 1540s. That ten years passed between the time of the crusade and the commissioning of the Tunis group in 1546 casts some doubt on claims that Charles envisaged a monumental series of tapestries from the start of the campaign.

Vermeyen's whereabouts between August 1536, when the campaign ended, and November 1539 are uncertain. He may have visited Italy in 1536 in Charles's retinue, in which case a monopoly he obtained from the Council of Brabant in May 1536 (renewed in March 1538) giving him exclusive rights over prints depicting the siege and portraits of the protagonists, must have been drawn up in his absence.<sup>32</sup> In 1539 he was with Charles in Spain, and he probably returned to the Low Countries in Charles's entourage. His activity during the early 1540s is undocumented, and Horn assumes that it was during these years that he began working as a tapestry designer, a supposition that will be considered below.<sup>33</sup> In the first part of the 1540s he evidently continued to produce engravings, portraits, and religious paintings, of which Horn has identified a substantial, representative group.<sup>34</sup>

As already noted, not all the circumstances surrounding the conception of the suite of tapestries commemorating the campaign to Tunis are clear. We do know, however, that Mary of Hungary, acting on Charles's behalf, contracted Vermeyen in June 1546 to prepare twelve cartoons recording the principal events of the crusade. The theory that this commission must have been preceded by other tapestry designs by Vermeyen is unfounded, as the artist's authority to conceive such a suite could well have rested merely on his presence during the campaign and on the visual records he made of it. The arrangements for the production of this series are remarkably well documented by contracts drawn up between Mary and both the artist and the merchant-weaver, Willem de Pannemaker, along with many other records relating to the supply of raw materials and the progress of work on both the cartoons and the tapestries themselves.<sup>35</sup>

The commission was conceived as an elaborate and expensive undertaking of enormous scale, and the idea that Vermeyen may

have received help from Coecke in this ambitious project is not new. Inspired by the erroneous tradition that Coecke may have accompanied Vermeyen to Tunis, and recognizing an obvious stylistic affinity between certain figures in the *Tunis* tapestries and those in works attributed to Coecke, a number of art historians and tapestry historians who wrote during the first half of the twentieth century assumed that Coecke played a part in the production of the series.<sup>36</sup> In fact, as Schneebalg-Perelman and Buchanan have argued more recently, documents survive that support this idea, but the significance of this evidence has largely been overlooked because of the way it was presented by Marlier and Horn.<sup>37</sup> It is thus useful to review both the evidence and the conclusions that Marlier and Horn drew from it.

From the first there was clearly an expectation that Vermeyen would require help in the production of this huge series of cartoons, which is not surprising given the realities of contemporary cartoon production. The initial contract of June 1546 between Mary of Hungary and Vermeyen, drawn up following approval of the artist's preliminary designs, required him to "hire at his own expense sufficient knowledgeable fellow painters . . . whatever they may cost, so that the cartoons may be executed in the best possible manner."<sup>38</sup> Whether he made use of such help immediately is uncertain, but he evidently had to struggle to execute this monumental project and was unable to deliver the cartoons within a period of eighteen months, as he had promised to do. On April 19, 1548, twenty-two months after the original contract was signed, Mary wrote to Charles to tell him that the cartoons had not advanced as quickly as expected, but that she was encouraged by the progress now being made by "master Jan" and "un altre peintre," giving her good hope that the work would be completed so that the weavers would not be held up by the late delivery of the cartoons.<sup>39</sup>

The identity of this second painter is not given, but evidence is provided by documents dating from the end of 1550. Correspondence between Mary and Charles shows that the first two tapestries appear to have been nearing completion late in 1550, and in October Mary seems to have planned to send them, along with two cartoons showing other subjects, to Charles in Austria.<sup>40</sup> Four iron chests, presumably intended for the transport of these items, were delivered to the houses of "Master Pierre van Halszoone, painter [i.e., Coecke's son], and Willem de Pannemaker," where, according to the delivery receipt, the *Conquest of Tunis* cartoons and tapestries were located.<sup>41</sup> The fact that the chests were delivered to the house of Coecke's son has led to suggestions that it may have been the son rather than the father who was involved in producing the cartoons. However, any ambiguity about whether

the older or the younger artist worked on them is dispelled by the text of a letter Mary sent to Charles a few weeks later, on December 17, 1550. The letter is damaged, but the important sentence is legible: "As for the tapestry of Tunis I cannot accompany it on this trip, because apart from all the delays of the workers, it has pleased God to take for himself the painter master Pieter."<sup>42</sup> The meaning is quite obvious: the project, already slowed by delays in the weaving of the tapestries, had been further impeded by the death of the second painter, Master Pieter. A few lines later Mary states that it will now be necessary to engage "un aultre peintre." As Coecke died of unknown causes in December 1550, these remarks provide explicit evidence that the second artist who played a significant role in the production of the cartoons was Coecke senior.

Although the implication of these documents is clear, both Marlier and Horn strenuously maintained that Coecke did not participate in the undertaking. Marlier, who knew only of the documents relating to the delivery of the iron chests to the house of "Pierre van Halszoone," based his position on a number of unconvincing arguments. One was rooted in the assumption that it is unlikely that Coecke, at the height of his career, would have accepted a role as an assistant in such a project. This notion surely derives from a misunderstanding of both the importance of this imperial commission—Coecke was, after all, one of Charles V's court artists—and of the collaborative nature of the production of large-scale tapestry projects. Marlier also doubted that Coecke would have been involved in this major enterprise in the last years of his life. This, however, implies that the artist died in old age, when his death actually occurred at forty-eight, at the height of his career, when involvement in such a prestigious undertaking would have been entirely appropriate. Marlier considered style as well, dismissing the evident similarities between the figures in the *Tunis* tapestries and works indisputably attributed to Coecke as the inevitable consequence of a common artistic climate shared by two different painters. In addition, he compared the *Tunis* designs and the *Saint Paul* cartoons, noting their divergent appearance, but, as we have seen, the latter were probably conceived some sixteen or seventeen years earlier than the former when Coecke was working in a markedly different style. Arguing that the house to which the metal trunks were delivered was likely that of Coecke's son, Marlier suggested that it may have been the son rather than the father who worked on the cartoons. Coecke junior, who must have been twenty-three or twenty-four at this date, may well have been assisting his father, although the presence of the cartoons at his house may equally have had something to do with the unknown circumstances of his father's death shortly afterward.

Marlier's interpretation of the documents was challenged by Schneebalg-Perelman in her book of 1982, where she argued that Mary's letters proved Coecke's involvement in the *Tunis* project. Unfortunately, her thesis appeared in an extended, and now discredited, attempt to reattribute the *Hunts of Maximilian* design series to Coecke, rather than to van Orley.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps influenced by the disdain with which Schneebalg-Perelman's main proposal was met, Horn gave her ideas short shrift in his study of the *Tunis* series. In his response he boldly stated that no part of the cartoons can be convincingly attributed to Coecke and that they do not display the dichotomy of styles that would result from a collaboration between two artists.<sup>44</sup> In support of this opinion, Horn recapitulated Marlier's arguments, including those based on the inappropriate assumption of Coecke's premature dotage and the idea that the artist's eldest son may have participated in the production of the series. Somewhat surprisingly, Horn entirely ignored the crucial evidence of the letter of December 1550 in which Mary of Hungary specifically cites Master Pieter's death as an obstacle in the path of work on the *Tunis* tapestries.

In summary, both Marlier and Horn appear to have approached the documentation with preconceived notions that led them to draw misleading conclusions. Clearly, however, a fresh view of the evidence is in order, and it testifies to Coecke's participation in the *Tunis* project. Here we might point out, in support of arguments to this effect, that Mary's familiar reference to the second individual involved in the undertaking as "Master Pieter" indicates that he was a court artist with whom Charles was acquainted. Coecke's expertise as a tapestry designer and cartoonist would have made him the ideal collaborator for Vermeyen if Vermeyen, who was inexperienced in this field, needed help in accomplishing the enormous series. Moreover, it is entirely possible that Coecke moved to Brussels in the last years of his life expressly to assist Vermeyen in executing this commission. Why Coecke rather than Coxie worked with Vermeyen is unknown. Perhaps it was because at the time the *Tunis* tapestries were in production Coxie was executing cartoons for the monumental Old Testament series whose editio princeps were delivered to the Polish court in the early 1550s (see pp. 401–3 and cat. no. 52).

If the documentary evidence calls for a renewed consideration of the question of Coecke's collaboration, what of the visual evidence? Despite Horn's opinion to the contrary, the figures, in particular those of the foreground, are of two very different sorts: one corresponding to types in Coecke's mature work, the others to those readily identifiable in Vermeyen's oeuvre.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, of the twelve *Tunis* designs, four or five incorporate foreground figures that markedly resemble elements in Coecke's Lisbon triptych, the



Fig. 179. *The Quest for Fodder* from the *Conquest of Tunis*. Tapestry designed by Jan Vermeyen, with the collaboration of Pieter Coecke van Aelst in painting the cartoon, woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1550–54. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 525 x 925 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Mordecai drawing, and the *Customs and Fashions of the Turks*. Most obviously these include the portrait of the artist in the first scene of the series, the *Map of the Field of Battle*; the soldiers, as well as the horses, in the foreground of the *Muster* scene; the foreground figures in the *Skirmishes on the Cape of Carthage*; and those in the *Quest for Fodder* (figs. 179, 180).<sup>46</sup> All conform to a generic type familiar in Coecke's later work, with refined facial features and a flowing and graceful outline but a relative lack of musculature. These characteristics are notably absent in the figures of the other *Tunis* cartoons and tapestries (fig. 181), which are often fleshier and more idiosyncratic, giving the impression of carefully realized portraits, and reflect Vermeyen's style as displayed in his paintings.

In brief, then, we can identify Coecke's contribution of the foreground figures in at least five of the *Tunis* designs, based on their stylistic analogies with his documented works in other media. In turn, the parallels between the figures in the *Tunis* tapestries, those in Coecke's later works in different media, and those in the *Poesia*, *Medici Story of the Creation*, and *Vertumnus and Pomona* tapestry series provide strong grounds for attributing the conception and design of the three latter groups to Coecke or his workshop. That no documentary evidence has emerged to suggest that Vermeyen ever worked on any tapestry commission other than the *Tunis* panels adds weight to the theory that Coecke rather than Vermeyen was their author. Horn assumed that Vermeyen may have become involved in tapestry design after he returned to the Netherlands from his services abroad for Charles. However, none



Fig. 180. *The Quest for Fodder*. Detail of the cartoon for the tapestry from the *Conquest of Tunis*, the figures here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst after a design by Jan Vermeyen, ca. 1548–50. Charcoal and body color on paper mounted on canvas, 385 x 832 cm (dimensions of whole). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Fig. 181. *The March to Rada*. Detail of the cartoon for the tapestry from the *Conquest of Tunis* by Jan Vermeyen, ca. 1548–54. Charcoal and body color on paper mounted on canvas, 385 x 887 cm (dimensions of whole). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

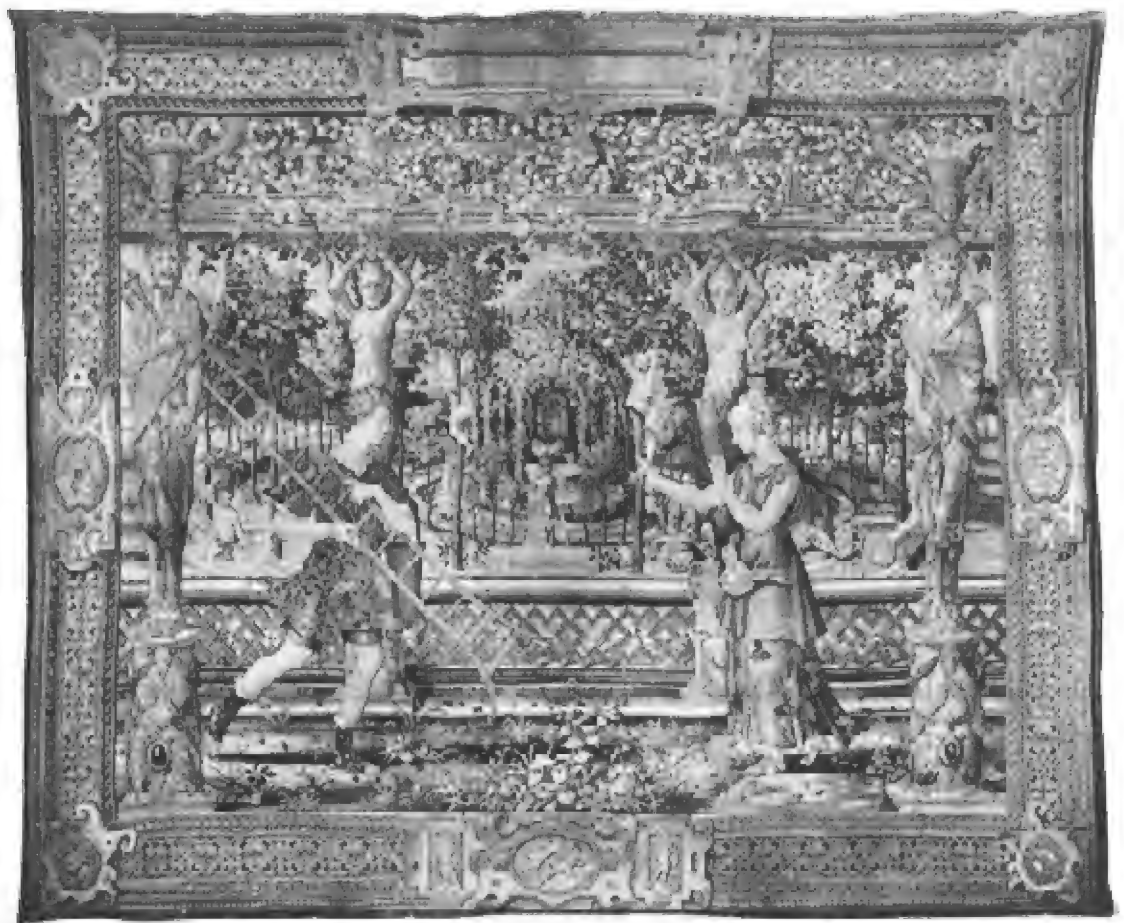
of the painted or engraved works of the 1540s that he attributes to Vermeyen, which include a broad range of portraits and genre and religious subjects, has the slightest resemblance to this group of tapestry designs.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the assignment of these designs to Vermeyen, first made by Crick-Kuntziger in 1927 and subsequently followed by many other authors, depends solely on the circular argument involving their stylistic similarity to figures in the *Tunis* tapestries.<sup>48</sup> Horn himself was skeptical about Vermeyen's role in the design of these series because their overall appearance is so different from that of his autograph work. Indeed, he sought to explain this divergence in the case of the *Vertumnus and Pomona* group as the mark of artists with whom Vermeyen may have worked. Among these collaborators, Horn suggested Cornelis Bos, who appears to have had a drawing by Vermeyen in his possession when he fled Antwerp in 1544.<sup>49</sup> However, Horn's supposition that this sheet was a cartoon for the *Vertumnus and Pomona* series is wholly unwarranted. Further circumstantial support for the attribution of the *Poesia*, *Medici Creation*, and *Vertumnus and Pomona* series to Coecke is provided by the fact that the cartoons for all three appear to have belonged to Antwerp merchants rather than to the merchant-weavers of Brussels, where Vermeyen worked: the cartoons for the *Creation* and the *Poesia* to the van der Walle family and those for the *Vertumnus and Pomona* to Joris Vezeleer.

If Coecke did provide the *modelli* for these three series, he may also have played a part in the conception of another of the great sets of the mid-sixteenth century, that of the lost *Story of Psyche*, a weaving of which was delivered to Henry II in 1550. Although the *editio princeps* was burned in 1797 and no other sixteenth-century weaving is known, the appearance of the series is recorded in part in early seventeenth-century copies made in Paris.<sup>50</sup> The designs are based in part on a series of thirty-two engravings produced by the Master of the Die from designs that Vasari attributed to Coxcie.<sup>51</sup> However, the figures in the Parisian copies bear a strong familial resemblance to those in the group of designs here attributed to Coecke, raising an issue that clearly requires further investigation.

Although the arguments sketched-in here call for additional research, even in their present form they point the way to the resolution of several problems of attribution that have troubled tapestry historians for more than fifty years. First they indicate that the extant evidence gives us no reason to attribute any design other than that of the *Tunis* series to the hand of Vermeyen;<sup>52</sup> thus, the important role critics have tended to assign to him as a designer of tapestry cartoons during the 1540s must be reexamined with a very critical eye. Second, they demonstrate that several of the most important design series of the day may reasonably be returned to Coecke's oeuvre. We should recognize, however, that Coecke was



Fig. 182. *Vertumnus Disguised as an Apple Picker* from the *Story of Vertumnus and Pomona*. Tapestry design here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1545–50. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 425 x 500 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid



probably responsible only for the *modelli*, and that the cartoons and many of the details of the designs (particularly the landscapes and gardens in the *Creation* and *Vertumnus and Pomona* series) were likely executed by unidentified assistants. If this hypothesis is correct, the assignment of these designs to Coecke tells us something about the activity of his Antwerp cartoon workshop during the 1540s. Indeed, it would throw new light on the relationship of Antwerp and Brussels as centers of tapestry design in this period, with Coecke playing a role in Antwerp that equaled that of Michiel Coxcie in Brussels.

#### ITALIAN DESIGNS IN BRUSSELS, 1540S AND 1550S

Some of the finest cartoon series produced in Brussels during the 1540s and 1550s—the *Story of Moses*, the *Fruits of War* (*Fructus belli*), the *Playing Boys* (*Puttini*), and the *Story of Mercury and Herse*—are characterized by somewhat etiolated figures placed in friezelike compositions; the emphasis here is on profile and line, recalling Giulio Romano's late style, if not his idiosyncratic vision. These figures are presented in settings whose architecture and landscapes are more Italianate than those of Pieter Coecke van Aelst, Michiel Coxcie, and the artists in their circles. As several of the designs in question were commissioned by Giulio's patron Ferrante Gonzaga, it seems logical to assume that they were made in Giulio's

workshop or by an artist who had been associated with it. That Giulio's workshop may well have produced designs for sets of *Mythological Hunts* (see figs. 155, 156) and a *Story of the Sabine Women* for the Brussels workshops during the 1530s (see pp. 349, 351) supports this hypothesis.

The first securely documented design in this group was for the *Fructus belli* set woven for Ferrante Gonzaga, which survives today in the dispersed locations of West Dean, Ecouen, and Brussels (see fig. 121).<sup>53</sup> According to a letter sent by the merchant-tapisier Jehan Baudouyn to Ferrante on August 31, 1547, eight of the *Fructus belli* tapestries were complete by that date, while a ninth had not yet been started. Delmarcel has suggested, therefore, that the set was probably commissioned during Ferrante's visit to Brussels in 1544. Although one scene presents a recognizable portrait of Ferrante being drawn on a triumphal chariot (in a composition obviously derived from Giulio's *Triumph of Scipio* series), the others depict brutal images of the hardships and sufferings inflicted by war. These latter panels constitute a disenchanted and ironic reflection of the reality of war, commissioned by a military commander who had perhaps experienced too much of that reality in a career of twenty years on the battlefield. The inspiration for this grim meditation, whose portrayals stand in such marked contrast to the triumphalist imagery of the contemporary *Conquest of Tunis*



Fig. 183. *Moses Striking the Rock* from the *Story of Moses*. Tapestry design attributed to Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona after Raphael-school prototype (the fresco of this subject in the Vatican Loggia), woven in the Dermoyen workshop, Brussels, 1545–50. Wool and silk, 350 x 470 cm. Château of Châteaudun

series commissioned by Charles V, may have been Fray Antonio de Guevera's *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio emperador*. This volume, published in 1528 and first translated into Italian in 1542, contains a fictitious letter in which Aurelius reflects on the cost of his triumphal procession.<sup>54</sup>

In various publications Delmarcel has proposed that the *Fructus belli* series may have been conceived by Giulio before his death in November 1546,<sup>55</sup> a theory certainly supported by the length of time that must have been involved in preparing the designs and cartoons. Moreover, many compositional elements (among them the triumphal chariot) and the *all'antica* spirit of the designs (conveyed, for example, by costumes of the soldiers) reflect the influence of Giulio, while the borders relate directly to frescoes in his Sala degli Stucchi in the Palazzo Te in Mantua. Yet, the angular and etiolated figures suggest that the designs were prepared by an artist in Giulio's workshop rather than by the master himself. Documents in the Gonzaga archives demonstrate that on a number of occasions during the 1540s local artists were paid for executing tapestry cartoons, of which at least one group, prepared between May and December 1549 by Anselmo Guazzi—one of Giulio's former students—was to be sent to Brussels. Unfortunately, we know too little of Guazzi's work to make a useful comparison of his style with any extant tapestry designs. However, the evidence relating to this later commission certainly supports the idea that designs for the *Fructus belli* series originated in Mantua during the mid-1540s. The *Fructus belli* cartoons, of which three survive in the Louvre, are assumed to have been painted in Brussels.

A second, stylistically similar series of which the editio princeps also appears to have been woven for Ferrante Gonzaga is a twelve-piece set showing the *Story of Moses* that is now at Châteaudun château (fig. 183). Although the earliest documented reference to this set in the Gonzaga collection is in an inventory of 1590, Delmarcel has suggested that the set was probably woven in the late 1540s or early 1550s because it is stylistically and technically close to the *Fructus belli* tapestries.<sup>56</sup> Ten scenes illustrate well-established subjects from the patriarch's life, such as *Moses and the Burning Bush*, the *Passage through the Red Sea*, the *Brazen Serpent*, and the *Gathering of Manna*. The two additional images depict more unusual episodes, the *Israelites Killing the Five Midianite Kings* and the *Abduction of the Midianite Women and Children*, with figures and costumes that are extremely similar to those of the *Fructus belli* set. In fact, the parallels are so close that Delmarcel has hypothesized that these additional designs may originally have been intended as components of the *Fructus belli* group and that they were adapted for the *Moses* tapestries (perhaps to expand that sequence to fit the dimensions of a particular location).<sup>57</sup> Whether or not this was the case, the stylistic similarities shared by the *Midianite* panels, the rest of the *Moses* series, and the *Fructus belli* set leave little doubt that the *modelli* and the cartoons for all of these works were executed by the same designer and cartoonist teams. Four of the classical subjects are based on frescoes painted by Giulio and his colleagues in the Vatican Loggia, while a drawing by an unknown hand for the scene of the *Brazen Serpent* survives in the Louvre. Seeking to explain this quoting of Raphael-school



models, Mahl attributed the drawing and by extension the cartoons for the set to Tommaso Vincidor, but the likely date of conception of the series and its stylistic proximity to the *Fructus belli* designs, which we know were conceived for Ferrante, suggest that the author was more probably located in Giulio's workshop.<sup>58</sup> Further confirmation of this origin is provided by the pseudoclassical border of figures and putti emerging from scrolling acanthus leaves, a design that is extremely close to that used in the upper frieze in the Sala di Ovidio in the Palazzo Te.

In addressing the identity of the principal cartoonist of the *Fructus belli* and *Moses* series Delmarcel has identified one artist who may have played an important part as Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona. Little is known of Lodi, but he seems to have been a figure of some repute in the tapestry industry. In 1540 he acted as a consultant to the imperial court in assessing the value of four chimney paintings by Frans Borremans. According to one of his pupils, he lived in Brussels from 1540 to 1549. Whatever Lodi was doing during the 1540s, it evidently ensured him relative prosperity, as he retired sometime about 1550 to Lier, near Antwerp, where he lived with the Cremonese merchant Gian-Carlo Affaitadi.<sup>59</sup>

Lodi's knowledge of, and perhaps involvement with, the tapestry industry is reflected in the role he performed as an adviser and agent for Ferrante Gonzaga in the execution of the aforementioned *Fructus belli* set and a later *Puttini* series. That he was engaged in these activities is indicated in two documents justifying the cost of the *Fructus belli* tapestries to Ferrante from the weaver of the set, Jehan Baudouyn, who stated that he would be happy for "Jehan Baptiste painctre" and other merchants to examine their quality to support his case. The second is a subsequent note recording that a "Battista Lodi pittore" acted as Ferrante's agent in the commission of an unnamed set of tapestries in February 1552, when he traveled from Antwerp to Brussels and negotiated the terms of production with Willem de Pannemaker.<sup>60</sup> The panels in question were to include gold and silver thread, a fact that allows us to identify them with a set of *Puttini* tapestries now in a private collection (see fig. 184). The latter loosely follow the same theme treated in the set made in Mantua for Ferrante's brother Ercole from designs executed by Giulio during the 1540s (see cat. nos. 57–59). In Ercole's group, however, the putti among vines appear to have a eucharistic symbolism, whereas the motif in Ferrante's set seems to be intended as an evocation of the ubiquitous golden age that every Italian ruler of the day claimed for his subjects. Stylistically, the figures of the putti and the settings of Ferrante's *Puttini* tapestries have much in common with the figures and landscapes of the *Fructus belli* and *Moses* sets, and one of the *Puttini* panels depicts buildings that appear to represent the Villa Gualtieria, the patron's

Milan residence. For these reasons we probably can assume that the design concepts and cartoons of the three groups were produced by the same designer and cartoonist team. On the strength of Lodi's participation in the negotiations for the execution of the *Puttini* set, Delmarcel has suggested that he may have been involved in painting the cartoons. This is certainly possible, although, as Delmarcel himself observes, there is as yet no concrete evidence to substantiate this idea.<sup>61</sup> It is to be hoped that future archival discoveries, combined with detailed study of the *modelli* for the *Moses* series, will reveal more about the identity and character of this artist who may well have played a much more important role than has yet been realized in the design and cartoon preparation of some of the most important tapestry series of the 1540s.

Such investigations should also consider the close stylistic links between the figures in the Giulio-school designs discussed above and those in the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio* tapestries executed for Mary of Hungary during the 1540s (see p. 349 and cat. no. 43). As Forti Grazzini has noted, another series that requires further research in this context the eight-piece *Story of Mercury and Herse*, of which several partial sets of very high quality survive, for example, in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 185), the Palazzo del Quirinale, and various private Spanish collections.<sup>62</sup> The earliest set carries the merchant-tapisier mark now identified as that of the Dermoyen workshop, while later sets bear the mark of Willem de Pannemaker. Based on the story told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the series represents idealized figures in well-executed

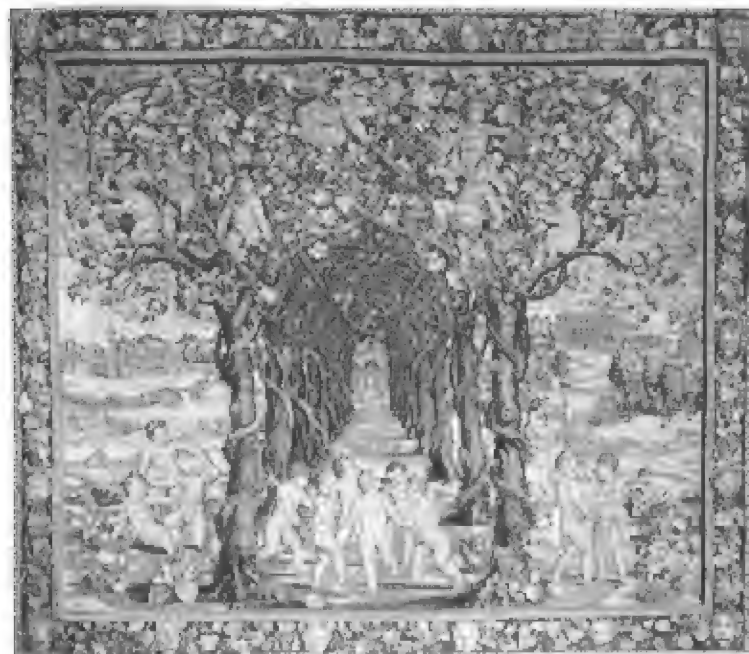


Fig. 184. *The Dance from the Puttini*. Tapestry design attributed to Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona, woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1552–57. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 390 x 473 cm. Private collection, Trissino

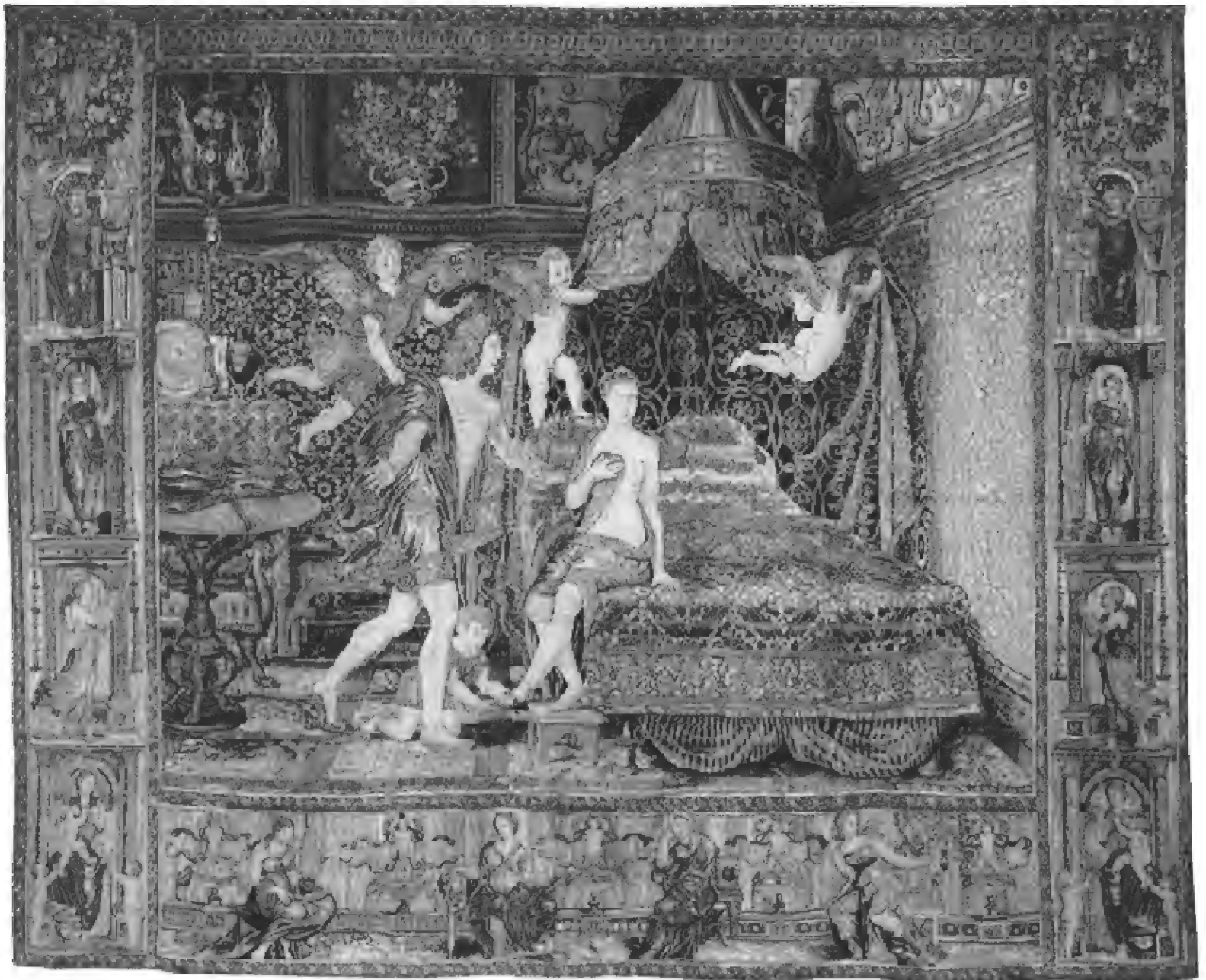


Fig. 185. *The Bridal Chamber of Herse* from the *Story of Mercury and Herse*. Tapestry design attributed to Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona, woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1550. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 439 x 538 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bequest of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.190.135)

Italianate landscapes, with echoes of Raphael-school models in several scenes. On stylistic grounds the conception of this series can probably be placed in the late 1540s. The quotations from Raphael-school designs have led previous commentators to ascribe the *Story of Mercury and Herse* to a variety of the master's pupils, including Giovanni Francesco Penni and Vincidor. However, the likely date of conception of the series and the evident stylistic traits it shares with the *Fructus belli* and *Moses* tapestries suggest that it was designed and created by the designer-cartoonist team responsible for those sets and that the Raphael-school quotations reflect a knowledge of such elements transmitted through Giulio's workshop in Mantua.

#### MICHEL COXCIE

The second of van Orley's putative pupils to exert an abiding impact on northern European tapestry design was Michiel Coxcie (ca. 1499–1592). Hailed by van Mander and Vasari as one of the leading artists of the day, in particular for the role he played in the introduction of Italian forms to Netherlandish art, Coxcie has been relatively neglected by modern art historians. Friedländer barely mentioned him in his history of Netherlandish painting, van Puyvelde dismissed him as a painter of the second rank, and no monograph has yet appeared on his work.<sup>63</sup> The situation was somewhat ameliorated when a conference on Coxcie's varied achievements was held in 1992 and by the subsequent publication



of the papers, but many aspects of his career require further examination. The unusual reticence regarding Coxcie on the part of art historians is partly explicable as a reaction to the devices he employed to cope with the large workload that resulted from his broad-ranging activities—devices that included the extensive use of Italian models, often applied with little or no modification. Indeed, Dacos has characterized his production as a mosaic of borrowings.<sup>64</sup> Scholars have also been indifferent because so much of Coxcie's most important work was undertaken on behalf of the Brussels tapestry industry, where his contribution as a designer is not only very poorly documented but also represented at two removes due to the nature of the medium. In recent years, however, a sizable corpus of tapestry designs has been attributed to Coxcie on the basis of stylistic comparison with his paintings and drawings, and this exhibition provides a welcome opportunity to focus new attention on his important accomplishments in this sphere.<sup>65</sup>

Little is known of Coxcie's early life and career, but van Mander tells us that he was a pupil of van Orley. In fact, analysis of paintings produced by van Orley's workshop during the 1520s does reveal the hand of an assistant with stylistic links to identifiable works by Coxcie.<sup>66</sup> If he was a student of this master, we can assume that he would have encountered Vincidor in Brussels and that he may also have taken part in the execution of some of the Raphael-school cartoons. Shortly after 1530 he followed Coecke's example and traveled to Rome (a terminus post quem for the journey is provided by a signed copy Coxcie made of the *Baptism of Christ* that Jan van Scorel painted in Haarlem in 1530).<sup>67</sup> By the time Vasari met Coxcie in 1532, the artist was engaged in painting frescoes in the chapel of Santa Barbara in the church of Santa Maria dell'Anima in Rome under the patronage of his aged compatriot Cardinal Willem Enckevoirt, and two years later he was registered in the Accademia di San Luca in the same city. Evidence of the evolution of Coxcie's style under the influence of his surroundings is provided by the frescoes he executed in the Santa Barbara chapel (fig. 186), where the figures closely follow, indeed are in part copied from, models by Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo.<sup>68</sup> During these years Coxcie also appears to have fallen under the spell of Michelangelo's work. A series of ten drawings of the *Loves of Jupiter*, executed in the mid-1530s and subsequently engraved, are clearly inspired by the drawings Michelangelo executed for Tommaso de' Cavalieri in 1532, while the influence of the Sistine ceiling is readily evident in frescoes at the Trinità dei Monti that Laurenza has recently attributed to Coxcie.<sup>69</sup>

Vasari records that Coxcie made many drawings after the works of Raphael and other masters while he was in Rome. The influence of Raphael, Sebastiano del Piombo, and Michelangelo was to



Fig. 186. *The Martyrdom of Saint Barbara*. Fresco by Michiel Coxcie, ca. 1532–34. Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome

manifest itself in Coxcie's production until the end of his life, earning him the epithet the Flemish Raphael but also the criticism of subsequent generations for the manner in which he copied, as much as he was inspired by, their works. Van Mander expresses an ambivalent attitude toward Coxcie, at one point recounting that the artist was annoyed when Hieronymus Cock published an engraving of Raphael's *School of Athens* thus revealing some of his sources. As we have seen, this attitude continues to pervade modern assessments of Coxcie's art.<sup>70</sup>

Coxcie must have gone back to the Low Countries in or just before 1539. The numerous citations that appear in his work of the next forty years make it clear that he brought many studies of



Fig. 187. *The Marriage of Saint Anne*. Michiel Coxcie, 1540. Oil on canvas, 245 x 191 cm. Kunstsammlungen, Stift Kremsmünster

Italian models with him. His knowledge of Italian art and his repertoire of Italianate forms, both architectural and figural, on which he could draw, found a ready market in the milieu of the Habsburg court. Indeed, as Van den Boogert has noted, his return coincided with the arrival of Charles V and his court in the Netherlands in 1540. This visit, the emperor's first since 1531, appears to have introduced into the North a new and more sophisticated awareness of and interest in the classical aesthetic embodied in the work of the Roman school.<sup>71</sup> At this time Coxcie, who was registered in the Guild of Saint Luke in Mechelen in 1539,<sup>72</sup> was executing paintings that clearly appealed to the new taste, as demonstrated by the *Marriage of Saint Anne*, signed and dated 1540 (fig. 187), whose figures and composition show an obvious debt to Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo.

From the early 1540s until the late 1550s Coxcie seems to have been based primarily in Brussels. His move there from Mechelen was probably precipitated by the death of van Orley on January 6, 1541. It was then that Coxcie took over the commission to design the windows in the chapel of Saint-Sacrement de Miracle in the Cathedral of Saint Gudule in Brussels, a task that van Orley had

commenced in 1537. Two monumental windows, one dedicated to Charles V (destroyed) and the other to Francis I, had been completed when Coxcie took up the project. The first window made after Coxcie's design, which shows John III of Portugal, was commissioned by October 24, 1541. He subsequently provided designs and cartoons for an additional four windows.<sup>73</sup>

Coxcie acquired his citizenship in Brussels in 1543.<sup>74</sup> Evidence that he enjoyed an official position as designer of tapestries to the town of Brussels from that year has generally been assumed on the basis of a document of 1563 granting Peter de Kempeneer an annual pension of 50 Rhenish guilders for performing the same task. This states that Coxcie had earned the same fee before him. The circumstances in which Coxcie received this appointment are unknown. Brussels had employed an official artist since the fifteenth century, and the individuals who held this position almost certainly provided tapestry designs to the town's weaving industry. However, the creation of a specific salary for a town tapestry designer appears to have been an innovation, perhaps reflecting an intensification of competition in this realm between Brussels and Antwerp and constituting a riposte to the initiative Antwerp had taken in funding a cartoon workshop under Coecke.

Coxcie's work on the Saint Gudule windows coincided with, or precipitated, his designation as one of Mary of Hungary's official court painters, a role he was subsequently to fulfill for both Margaret of Parma and Philip II.<sup>75</sup> Mary evidently held him in high esteem, paying him a fee four times higher than that received by Coecke.<sup>76</sup> As court artist, he painted portraits, religious subjects, and copies of the works of old masters, of which a number survive in the Spanish royal collection.<sup>77</sup> His most important commission for Mary appears to have been a sequence of frescoes at the castle of Binche, the majestic residence rebuilt for Mary between 1546 and 1550.<sup>78</sup> Following Mary's death in 1558, Coxcie's appointment was continued by Philip II, who commissioned a copy of the famous van Eyck altarpiece in Ghent from him. This project led to Coxcie's intermittent sojourn in Ghent between 1557 and 1559, after which time he moved to Mechelen, perhaps in the hope of obtaining commissions from the archiepiscopal court of Cardinal Granvelle.<sup>79</sup> Coxcie's workshop produced numerous paintings for the next thirty-two years until the master's death in 1592, at the age of ninety-three.<sup>80</sup> It is not clear whether he continued to work in a semiofficial capacity as designer of tapestries for the city of Brussels during this period or whether Kempeneer's appointment in 1563 represented an attempt to revive a position that had fallen into abeyance. However, the employment of Kempeneer in 1563 can perhaps be taken as an indication of the date from which Coxcie's activity as a tapestry designer was waning. Whatever the case, it



appears that Coxcie must have enjoyed this function with little rivalry in Brussels for much of the period between 1543 and 1563.

With one exception, no documents pertaining to the panels Coxcie designed for the Brussels tapestry industry have survived—probably because of the loss of the Brussels tapestry-guild records in 1695. The single commission documented with certainty is a set of “petitz patrons de la victoire de Saxe” of which Coxcie delivered nine designs to Mary of Hungary in 1550. No evidence remains to indicate whether this set, presumably a celebration of Charles’s military victory against the German Protestant princes at Mühlberg in 1547, was woven, and the subsequent fate of the designs is unknown.<sup>81</sup>

Knowledge of Coxcie’s achievements as a tapestry artist, apart from this one documented set of designs, largely depends on attributions based on stylistic analogies with his work in other media. In the course of recent years numerous tapestry design series have been ascribed to Coxcie in this manner, although little attempt has yet been made to analyze the circumstances in which these commissions came into being, the chronology of the series, and the extent to which Coxcie was involved in their production—an involvement that seems to have varied considerably from series to series.

The earliest tapestry design that has been attributed to Coxcie is that for a scene of the *Conversion of the Centurion Cornelius by Saint Peter* (fig. 188). Made for Cardinal Agostino Trivulzio, whose arms and *impresa* appear in the border, this was left to Pope Paul III at the cardinal’s death in 1548 and survives today in the Vatican collections. Although the style of weaving suggests that the tapestry was made in Brussels, the manifest influence of the work of Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo suggests that the design and cartoon were created in Rome. The design, traditionally attributed to Giulio Romano, has recently been reattributed to Coxcie by Forti Grazzini, who suggested that it was conceived during Coxcie’s sojourn in Rome on the basis of comparison with his frescoes in the chapel of Santa Barbara.<sup>82</sup> This attribution is supported by the reappearance of certain physiognomies from this piece—particularly the curly-haired, bearded facial type seen in three-quarter profile—in subsequent Coxcie designs.

The next design series that can be ascribed to Coxcie with some assurance—albeit in this instance without documentary evidence—is that of the *Story of Romulus and Remus*, of which an early weaving was purchased by Henry VIII before 1547. According to Henry’s inventory, this was purchased from the Antwerp dealer Pieter van der Walle.<sup>83</sup> Henry’s set is lost, but six fragments have survived from a duplicate set bought by Prince Philip of Spain in 1550 from Jan van der Walle (fig. 189). Some of these carry the



Fig. 188. *Conversion of the Centurion Cornelius by Saint Peter*. Tapestry design attributed to Michiel Coxcie, probably woven in Brussels, ca. 1530–35. Wool and silk, 491 x 412 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican City

mark of Willem de Pannemaker.<sup>84</sup> The appearance of another four scenes can be deduced from second-generation versions of the designs, now in Vienna, in which the narrative components have been divided into ten different panels and the landscape backgrounds considerably reworked.<sup>85</sup> The attribution of the design of the figures to Coxcie depends on their stylistic parallels with the protagonists in the *Judgment of Solomon* (location unknown) that the artist painted for the Brussels town hall in 1552 and representations of Noah’s sons in the *Story of Noah* (Wawel Royal Castle), also assigned to him.<sup>86</sup>

The largest and most memorable group of tapestry designs ascribable to Coxcie comprises four related biblical series of which the editio princeps were purchased by Sigismund II Augustus, king of Poland, between 1548 and 1553. These show six scenes of the *First Parents*, eight of the *Story of Noah* (see fig. 190 and cat. no. 52), four of the *Tower of Babel*, and five of the *Story of Moses* (of which only a fragment survives). They can be given to Coxcie on the basis of their close resemblance to the paintings and engravings of the same subjects that are indisputably from this hand, for example, the two paintings of the *First Parents* now

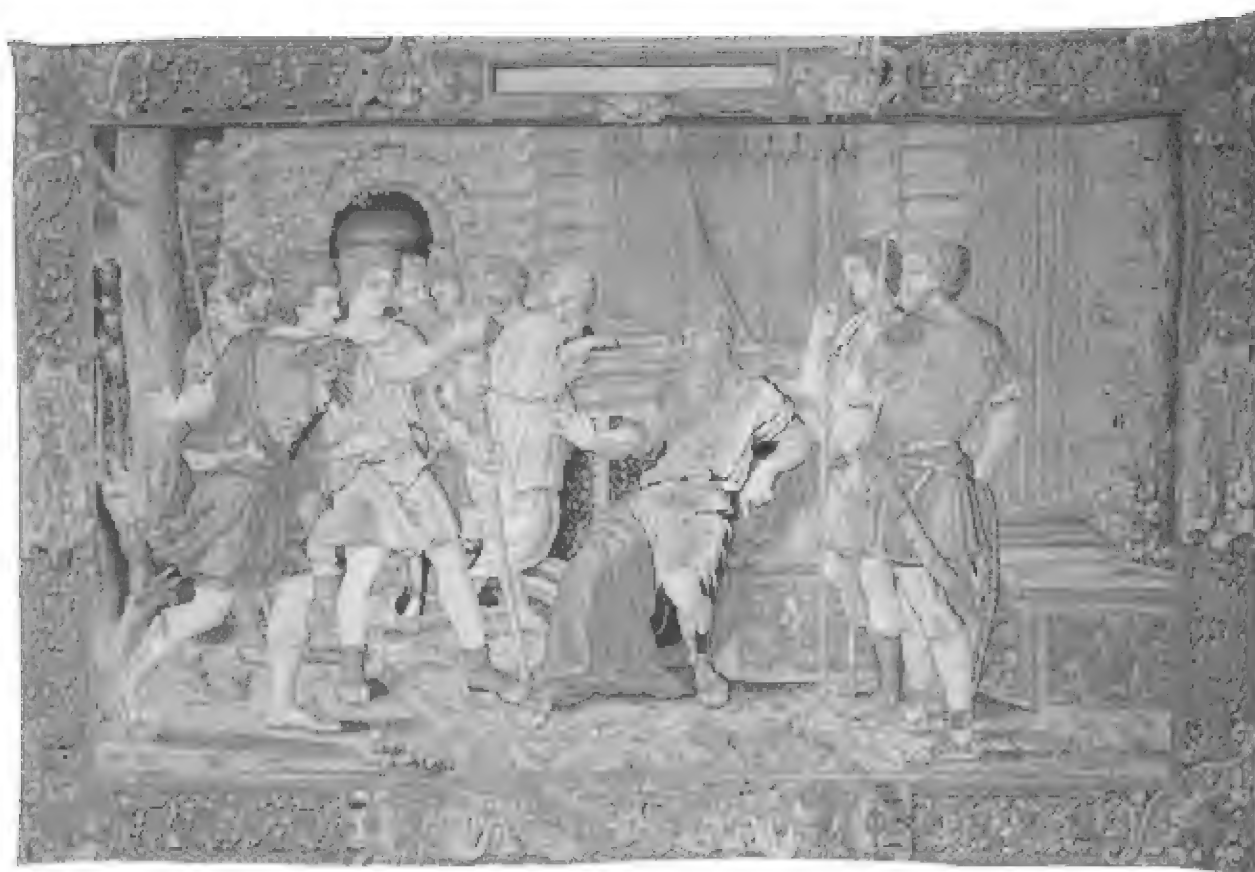


Fig. 189. *Romulus Reveals the Head of Numitor to Amulius from the Story of Romulus and Remus*. Tapestry design here attributed to Michiel Coxcie, woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, ca. 1540–45. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 210 x 310 cm. Private collection



Fig. 190. *The Blessing of Noah from the Story of Noah*. Tapestry design attributed to Michiel Coxcie, woven in the workshop of Jan de Kempeneer on behalf of Jan van Tieghem, Brussels, ca. 1550. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 467 x 604 cm. Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, Kraków





Fig. 191. *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise*. Michiel Coxcie, ca. 1540–50. Oil on panel, 237 x 86.5 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

in Vienna (see fig. 191). Presumably conceived and executed in succession during the second half of the 1540s, these designs represent Coxcie's greatest achievement as a tapestry designer, blending the heroic muscular figures and rhetorical gestures of his Roman models with the detailed landscape tradition that van Orley and Tons, his collaborator, had developed in series like the *Hunts of Maximilian*. Although the designs do, indeed, incorporate many quotations and even certain complete figures from Raphael and Michelangelo, the elements are integrated seamlessly into compositions of physical drama and atmospheric and emotional intensity that were wholly unprecedented in the art of tapestry. In the *First Parents* and *Noah* series in particular, Coxcie and his collaborators achieved a balance between the monumental drama of the principal events, as represented by the expressions and gestures of the main figures, and the need to fill the rest of the tapestry field with a wealth of carefully observed anecdotal and natural detail that was equal to the best of van Orley and Coecke's tapestry designs. Taken as a whole, the *First Parents*, *Noah*, and *Babel* sequences mark a high point in northern European tapestry design that was to remain unparalleled until the work of Charles Le Brun for Louis XIV at the Gobelins during the 1660s and 1670s.

Another design series that can be attributed to Coxcie is that of a *Triumph of the Seven Virtues*, a group datable to the period of the early to mid-1550s. A complete set survives in Vienna (see fig. 192). Again, the attribution rests on the figures, which are similar to those in the *Romulus and Remus* tapestries and the *Judgment of Solomon* painting, whose characteristic physiognomies and costumes they share.<sup>87</sup>

Despite the stylistic parallels cited in the discussion of attribution, there is considerable variation among the figures and landscapes in the series given to Coxcie. This variation unquestionably can be traced to the individual characteristics of the artists who translated the designs into full-scale cartoons. The extent to which Coxcie himself worked as a cartoonist is difficult to assess. Certainly, the biblical series at Wawel demonstrate a high degree of uniformity in landscape and figures, suggesting that here he may have been closely involved, possibly executing significant sections of the cartoons himself, in conjunction with a leading landscape cartoonist. In other works, for example the Vienna *Seven Virtues*, the schematic rendition of the figures and the somewhat arbitrary relationship between figures and landscape imply that there was little direct participation on the part of Coxcie, who may have simply handed over preparatory sketches to less-skilled cartoonists for elaboration. The nature of such sketches is suggested by a group of six drawings in Budapest for a set of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* (fig. 193), of which one carries Coxcie's monogram.



Fig. 192. *Fortitude* from the *Triumph of the Seven Virtues*. Tapestry design attributed to Michiel Coxcie, woven in the workshop of Frans Geubels, Brussels, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 345 x 470 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

It is clear that Coxcie sometimes merely provided figures to be placed into decorative schemes conceived by other artists. This was evidently the case with a throne baldachin (cat. no. 54) that was acquired by Charles III, duke of Lorraine. Here the central figures, Pluto and Proserpine, can be ascribed to Coxcie with some certainty, but the trompe l'oeil architectural surround was designed by Hans Vredeman de Vries, whose signature appears on the canopy along with the date 1561. A similar collaborative process can be proposed for the so-called *Grotesque Months*, now in Vienna, in which the figures are in Coxcie's style and the grotesque surrounds typify the manner of Cornelis Floris.

It must have been collaborative practices like these that account for the stylistic variations of figures and landscapes from one series to another and even within single series and panels. In addition, such practices make it difficult to distinguish the contributions of Coxcie from those of artists inspired by him. This is an especially acute problem when reviewing Coxcie's work because there is a large group of designs that reflects the master's influence in some respects but whose style differs markedly from that of the designs firmly ascribed to him. One of the most distinctive portions of this group is much more dynamic in composition than the series discussed above. It comprises three series, of which the first

is a composite reedition of the *Deeds and Triumphs of Scipio*, woven for Jacques d'Albon from new cartoons prepared for this purpose. Four of the original cartoons survive in France (fig. 194), while four of the original tapestries and one fragment are extant in American collections (Hearst Castle, San Simeon, and the Cincinnati Art Museum). The design of the complete series is recorded by copies made at the Gobelins Manufactory in the late seventeenth century. The figures are much heavier and more robust in comparison to those of the *Scipio* series sold to Mary of Hungary in 1544. Many share physiognomic traits with the figures in designs attributed to Coxcie, and the cartoons of this second-generation version of the *Scipio* theme have therefore been ascribed to his workshop.

The second series in this group is a ten-piece set of the *Story of Cyrus*, which shares the dynamism and grandiosity of concept seen in the d'Albon *Scipio* panels. The *Cyrus* designs can be ascribed with some confidence to Coxcie, both on the basis of comparison with certain of the Wawel tapestries and their readily identifiable Italian sources. A very fine weaving, possibly the editio princeps, survives in the Spanish royal collection. Some of the panels carry the mark of Jan van Tieghem, one of the weavers responsible for many of the examples in Wawel.<sup>88</sup> A terminus ante quem for the *Cyrus* series is provided by the fact that the Spanish set is recorded





Fig. 193. *The Triumph of Fame*. Preparatory drawing for a tapestry in a set of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* by Michiel Coxcie. Pen, ink, and wash, squared in red chalk, on paper, 25.5 x 38.3 cm. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (2841)

at Toledo in 1560, suggesting a date of conception and design in 1557–58 at the latest. Closely related to the *Cyrus* design, is the *Story of Alexander*, the third series in the group under consideration. The *Alexander* sequence is known only from an incomplete high-quality weaving in the Spanish royal collection, along with a coarser and later version, which was probably woven in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

Another group of designs that shows close affinities with Coxcie's oeuvre yet reflects a different artistic personality is centered around a series of the *Story of Samson*. These designs were prepared for Henry II but abandoned in 1559 because of his death. The partly completed cartoons appear to have remained unused in Brussels until the early seventeenth century, when they were re-discovered by Guido Bentivoglio, who was commissioning new tapestries in Brussels for Cardinal Scipio Borghese. According to a letter of January 9, 1610, from Bentivoglio to the cardinal the cartoons for this series were painted by an artist from Mechelen who had lived in Italy for a long time—a description that obviously coincides with what we know of Coxcie—but had been abandoned. The question is complicated, however, by a note from the Brussels merchant Jan Raes that Bentivoglio included in his letter to the cardinal. Providing details of the dimensions of the cartoons, this note also supplied the additional information that the design was “made by a famous painter called master Gillio Mechelaon, who had spent many years in Italy, and was a Fleming from Mechelen.”<sup>89</sup> No other evidence of a cartoonist called Giles of Mechelen has yet emerged, and it is quite possible that this was a mistake on Raes's part and that, as Delmarcel has assumed, this was a garbled reference to Coxcie.<sup>90</sup> It was, after all, sixty years since the cartoons had been painted. Equally, the citation places a



Fig. 194. *The Combat of Tessin*. Cartoon for the tapestry from the *Story of Scipio* attributed to the workshop of Michiel Coxcie after Giulio Romano, ca. 1550. Body color on paper mounted on canvas, 385 x 685 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

question mark over this identification and provides a reminder of how little we know about the community of tapestry cartoonists active in the Netherlands during the 1550s.

The *Story of Samson* has close stylistic parallels with other important design series of the day. One is a *Story of Tobias* sequence of which parts of two early sets are extant: one panel from a set purchased by Henry VIII before 1547 and eight pieces from a weaving bought by Mary of Hungary in 1547.<sup>91</sup> The second is a *Story of Hercules*, a set of which Henry VIII acquired before 1547 and a weaving of which survives in the Spanish royal collection.<sup>92</sup> The figures in these series, like those in the *Sampson* tapestries, are characterized by heavy-jowled men with wide, flat noses and walrus mustaches and by very masculine women.

According to a list of tapestries recorded by Isaac Bullart in 1682 and rediscovered by tapestry historians in the late nineteenth century, Coxcie also designed a set treating the *Story of Cadmus*, which was once in the Spanish royal collection. No evidence regarding this series has survived, if it ever existed—Cadmus may well have been a mistranscription of Cyrus, on which subject a design series in Coxcie's style does remain in Madrid, as discussed above.<sup>93</sup> The seventeenth-century list of tapestries in the Spanish royal collection also links Coxcie's name with a design series treating *Ulysses*, which has survived in various later editions that have some stylistic similarities to Coxcie's work, although it is possibly by an able follower.<sup>94</sup>

Much work is obviously still required in order to define and adequately assess Coxcie's contribution as a tapestry designer. Apart from the lack of documentation and the difficulty of reconstructing an oeuvre that was, in many cases, executed by gifted assistants and cartoon specialists, many questions also remain in regard to the context in which his designs were conceived and his relationship to the leading patrons and merchant-weavers of the day. Nonetheless, as the foregoing discussion has demonstrated, it is clear that between 1540 and 1560 Coxcie brought a scale of vision, an awareness of the achievements of the masters of the Italian High Renaissance, and a facility of creation to the task of tapestry design that provided the Brussels workshops with a rich variety of material in the most productive period of its history.

#### PETER DE KEMPENEER

As discussed above, Michiel Coxcie relocated to Mechelen sometime between 1559 and 1563. His place was subsequently taken by Peter de Kempeneer (1503–1580). Like Coxcie and Coecke, Kempeneer may have started his career in van Orley's workshop, but he seems to have traveled to Italy at about the same time as, or even in advance, of Coxcie and, according to a seventeenth-century

account, was at work in Bologna in 1530.<sup>95</sup> By 1537 he had relocated to Seville in Spain, where he lived and worked until at least August 1561 under the hispanicized name of Pedro (de) Campaña. The leading painter in the town during this period, he received many commissions from the cathedral and local churches for altarpieces and devotional works, which he executed in a style that blended Netherlandish realism with the figural types of Raphael-school pupils, such as Perino del Vaga and Polidoro da Caravaggio, and with what Dacos has characterized as the "impassioned and mystical tradition of Andalusia," as exemplified by works such as the *Deposition* painted in 1547 for Santa Cruz, Seville (now Seville Cathedral), and the altarpiece of the *Purification of the Virgin*, commenced in 1555 (Seville Cathedral).<sup>96</sup> Kempeneer had returned to Brussels by the spring of 1563, when the city authorities contracted with him on May 28, 1563, to design cartoons for the tapestry makers of the town for an annual salary of 50 Rhenish guilders, the same salary that Coxcie had previously received.<sup>97</sup> The explanation for Kempeneer's relocation and appointment at his advanced age is uncertain.

The earliest tapestry commission that can be attributed to Kempeneer (on stylistic grounds) was the preparation of the designs and cartoons for a ten-piece set of the *Story of Saint Peter and Saint Paul* (now Bijloke museum, Ghent, and private collection, France; see fig. 195). This was commissioned by Abbé François d'Avroult for the abbey of Saint Peter in Ghent and can be dated between 1563 (Kempeneer's appointment) and 1567 (d'Avroult's death). It was woven in the Brussels workshop of the merchant-weaver with the unidentified FNVG mark (possibly Frans Ghieteels), who was also involved in the production of Ercole Gonzaga's *Acts of the Apostles*, some of Sigismund II Augustus's *First Parents* scenes, and the throne baldachin of Charles III of Lorraine.<sup>98</sup> Although four of the designs represent the same subjects as those in the Raphael series, they differ markedly in character and composition; they also differ in format from that developed by Kempeneer's predecessor Coxcie. Where the earlier artists had represented large muscular figures that dominated the foreground of the picture space in compositions that were balanced around central groups and figures, Kempeneer's figures are characteristically smaller in proportion to the picture space, often massed in tight groups that are placed off-center in the foreground of the picture. As for the visual space of the designs, the scenes are set in cavernous interiors or in landscapes that are seen from a raised viewpoint and that often fall away steeply immediately beyond the foreground, opening up unexpectedly deep vistas, whether of interior rooms or of distant valleys. This mannerist formula also extended to the types of figures. In place of the idealized musculature of Coxcie's





Fig. 195. *The Vision of Saint Peter* from the *Story of Saint Peter and Saint Paul*. Tapestry designed by Peter de Kempeneer, woven in Brussels, between 1563 and 1567. Wool and silk, 270 x 555 cm. Bijlokesmuseum, Ghent

figures, Kempeneer's are more elongated and refined in feature and gesture. True to the traditional elements of tapestry design, Kempeneer nonetheless combined these mannerist characteristics with rich costumes and elaborate architectural and landscape details. The result was a multiple narrative formula in which rich colors combine with carefully observed details to yield a jewel-like tableau, like an exquisitely rendered drawing expanded to the scale of a wide-angle movie screen.

The Ghent *Peter and Paul* series is the most ambitious design that Kempeneer is known to have undertaken, but during the succeeding years he evidently provided other designs to the Brussels workshops, including those for a series of the *Wars of Judaea* (Museo de la Chiesa Madre, Marsala), which was woven in the Brussels workshop of Cornelis Tons (fl. 1550–75).<sup>99</sup> These designs demonstrate the same crowded foreground groups, mannered figures, wide landscapes, and rich costumes of the *Peter and Paul* series, albeit with a more decorative emphasis in the details of vegetation and landscape. The contrast suggests that, whereas Kempeneer may have been closely involved in the execution of the cartoons for the *Peter and Paul* series (measuring himself against the great Raphaellesque precedent), the cartoons for the *Wars of Judaea* may have been executed by cartoon specialists from Kempeneer's *modelli*.

While Kempeneer's role in these designs is readily evident on the basis of stylistic analysis, evidence of his involvement in other projects has not yet emerged. This may be due in part to the age at which he was appointed to his post, but it also reflects the collapse of the high-quality Brussels tapestry industry during the 1560s and 1570s under the impact of civil and religious strife.

1. For the basic documentation on Pieter Coecke van Aelst's life, see Marlier 1966, *passim*; also Halbturn 1981, *passim*, esp. the essay by Bauer on pp. 15–18.
2. Marlier 1966, p. 309.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–40.
4. Félibien records a tradition whereby Coecke assisted van Orley in the execution of the *Hunts*, for which see Marlier 1966, pp. 31–32, and Bauer in Halbturn 1981, p. 17. More recently, Schneeberg-Perelman (1982, *passim*, esp. pp. 160, 185–86) sought to attribute to Coecke the principal role in the design and execution of that set, a proposal which has been convincingly refuted by Delmarcel (1984).
5. Both sources quoted in full in Marlier 1966, pp. 24–27.
6. Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 38–41.
7. Marlier 1966, pp. 55–74.
8. For the modern origins of this tradition, see Horn 1989, p. 318, n. 225. For the possibility that a set treating this subject was present in Henry VIII's collection before 1547, see T. Campbell 1998a, p. 172.
9. Marlier 1966, pp. 42–43.
10. Horn 1989, pp. 14–15, 215.
11. Marlier 1966, pp. 93–239.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 309–52; Halbturn 1981.

13. Bauer in Halbturn 1981, p. 38.
14. Halbturn 1981, pp. 91–99.
15. Marlier 1966, pp. 324–31; Bauer in Halbturn 1981, pp. 19–31.
16. T. Campbell 1994, pp. 22, 25–26; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 180–81, 224.
17. Bauer in Halbturn 1981, p. 26.
18. Ibid., p. 20; Delmarcel 1999a, p. 127. For example, the group of the soldier with a foot on the neck of the king who is lying on the ground in the *Death of the Five Kings* is obviously copied from a similar composition in the *Defeat and Pardon of Mandonius and Indibilis*; see Paris 1978, pp. 64–72.
19. “[I]n onze Nederlanden het licht ghebracht en op den rechten wech geholpen de verdwaelde Const van Metselrije”; van Mander 1604, fol. 218.
20. Marlier 1966, pp. 45–46.
21. T. Campbell 1998b, pp. 28–32; Forti Grazzini 1999b, pp. 159–64.
22. “Men gheeft diversen consteneeren, alhier van buten comende ende nyeuwe neeringe brenghende ende der goeden lieden kinderen leerende, tot behulpe van huerder huyshueren: ierst Peeteren van Aelst, schildere ende patroonmakere. . . XII ponden X schellingen”; van den Branden 1883, p. 154; Marlier 1966, pp. 44–45.
23. Marlier 1966, p. 45.
24. Schneebalg-Perelman 1982, p. 210.
25. Marlier 1966, pp. 55–87. For the tapestry, see Göbel 1923, fig. 75.
26. Paredes 1999.
27. Meoni 1989.
28. Marlier 1966, pp. 345–47.
29. Horn 1989, pp. 5–7.
30. Ibid., p. 8.
31. Ibid., pp. 13–14.
32. Ibid., pp. 21–23.
33. Ibid., pp. 31, 43–47.
34. Ibid., pp. 31–37.
35. These documents have recently been published with a full critical appraisal by Horn 1989. Although the present study disagrees with certain conclusions Horn drew from this material, these differences should not detract from the extraordinary value of his monumental study.
36. See Horn 1989, pp. 123, 157, n. 106, for bibliography.
37. Marlier 1966, pp. 347–50; Schneebalg-Perelman 1982, pp. 218–22; Horn 1989, pp. 122–25, 157–58; Buchanan 1992, p. 383.
38. “[P]rendre a ses frais scavans et souffissans conpaignons paintres . . . quoy qu’ils luy coustent, affin que iceulx patrons soient faicts le mieulx que possible sera”; Horn 1989, pp. 122, 344.
39. “Mais voiant que mestre Jan a bien avancé les siens, et un altre peintre me donnant bon espoir de tellement diligenter les siens que les tapisseries n’attendront après luy. . . .”; ibid., p. 352, doc. 5.
40. Ibid., pp. 115–16 and docs. 29, 30, 33.
41. “Me Pierre van Halsz, pointre et Guillaume de Pannemackere, tapisserie, où se font les patrons et tapisserie de la conquête de Thunes faite par l’Empereur”; Marlier 1966, p. 350; Horn 1989, p. 123 and docs. 29, 30.
42. “[Quant] à le tapise de Tunes je n’en poray estre acompaignée [pour] ce voyage, car oultre toute longuer des ouvriers il a plut à Dieu prendre à soy le peintre mestre Piere”; Horn 1989, p. 123 and doc. 33.
43. Schneebalg-Perelman 1982; Delmarcel 1984.
44. Horn 1989, p. 123.
45. Ibid., pp. 278, 318, n. 223, with bibliography of earlier literature regarding these similarities.
46. Horn 1989, pls. B2b, B5, B6, B31, B32, B47, B48, and associated details. The foreground figure in the *Siege of Goleta* (cartoon right, tapestry left) shares the same traits; ibid., pls. B39, B40.
47. Ibid., pp. 31–35. It is also to be noted that Vermeyen made very few paintings or engravings of mythological subjects. Horn (ibid., p. 6) identifies only one engraving of *Venus and Cupid*, whose protagonists bear no resemblance to any of the figures in the tapestries under discussion.
48. Crick-Kuntziger 1927a. See Horn 1989, pp. 43–44, 102, n. 438, for later adherents of this attribution.
49. Horn 1989, pp. 44–46.
50. Guiffrey 1885–86, vol. 1, p. 294; Coornaert 1950; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 2, p. 531.
51. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 5, pp. 435–36.
52. Horn (1989, pp. 46–47) suggests that Vermeyen may have assisted Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona with the execution of the *Fructus belli* series of which the editio princeps was supplied to Ferrante Gonzaga by 1547, but the evidence he offers is unconvincing.
53. Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 158–73; Delmarcel 1997, pp. 389–90.
54. Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 165–66.
55. Ibid., pp. 158–73.
56. Ibid., pp. 194–205.
57. Ibid., pp. 197, 200–202.
58. Mahl 1967, p. 35 (Vincidor); McCullagh and Giles 1997, pp. 257–58, no. 335 (Tommaso Vincidor? or Michiel Coxcie?).
59. Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 170, 180, 191.
60. Ibid., pp. 96–97 doc. 19, 104–5 doc. 32; Delmarcel in ibid., pp. 184–93.
61. Delmarcel (ibid., p. 171) notes in addition that the Mantuan engraver Giorgio Ghisi lived and worked in Antwerp between 1549 and 1556 and that he might also have played a part in providing models from Giulio’s workshop to the Netherlandish cartoonists.
62. Standen 1985, vol. 1, pp. 87–99; Forti Grazzini 1994, vol. 1, pp. 170–82.
63. Friedländer 1924–37; Friedländer 1956; van Puyvelde 1950, p. 96.
64. Dacos 1993b, pp. 56–57.
65. In the absence of a catalogue raisonné, the crucial source on Coxcie’s work is the collection of essays resulting from a conference on the artist held in Mechelen in 1992; de Smedt 1993.
66. Dacos 1993a.
67. Ibid., pp. 50–52.
68. Dacos 1987c, p. 619; Dacos 1993b, pp. 65–70. For Coxcie in Rome, see Dacos 1993b and Laurenza 1993.
69. For the drawings, see Popham 1932, pp. 12–14, nos. 1–10; Dacos 1993b, pp. 77–78; Dacos in Brussels and Rome 1995, pp. 170–72. For the frescoes, see Laurenza 1993.
70. Van Mander 1604, fols. 258v–259. For discussion of Coxcie’s sources and practice, see Dacos 1993b. Dacos considers Coxcie’s work in terms of his sources and the way he used them in his paintings, arriving at a very critical appraisal of his achievement.
71. Van den Boogert 1993, p. 139.
72. E. Duverger 1993, p. 164.
73. Vanden Bemden 1993.
74. E. Duverger 1993, pp. 164–65.
75. For discussion of the date of this appointment, see van den Boogert 1993, pp. 123–26.
76. Ibid., pp. 137–38; E. Duverger 1993, p. 165.
77. Van den Boogert 1993, pp. 134–38.
78. Ibid., pp. 127–33; Laurenza 1993, pp. 112–16; van den Boogert in Utrecht and ’s Hertogenbosch 1993, pp. 281, 289–90.
79. Delmarcel 1981a, pp. 161–62; E. Duverger 1993, p. 165.
80. For the later painted work, see Jacobs 1993 and Van de Velde 1993.
81. An echo of their appearance may be recorded by a series of frescoes formerly at the castle of Oriz (now Museo de Navarra, Pamplona); Steppe 1968; E. Duverger 1993, pp. 168–69.
82. Forti Grazzini 1999b, pp. 144–46.
83. T. Campbell 1998c, pp. 45–46, 50, n. 21; Starkey 1998, p. 273, no. 12032.
84. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 140–42 (ser. 20); Mahl 1965, pp. 30–32; Christie’s, New York, November 22, 1980, no. 276. Two related tapestries, possibly from the same set, have reappeared in recent



- years: the *Rape of Rhea Silvia* by Mars belongs to the Treuhand Verwaltung von Kulturgut, Munich (8.11.1961), and is now in the German Embassy, London; *Romulus and Remus Brought before Amulius* was sold at Sotheby's, London, May 19, 1995, no. 8. Ippolito d'Este purchased a seven-piece set of *Romulus and Remus* in 1543, but the early acquisition date and the number of panels in the set suggest that this was from an unrelated design series.
85. Mahl 1965.
  86. Johns 1993.
  87. According to a 1582 document, Coxcie was responsible for the designs of seven large hangings embroidered with the Seven Virtues, perhaps made from the same cartoons as the tapestries; Schneebalg-Perelman 1973.
  88. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 279–89; E. Duverger 1993, pp. 178–81.
  89. “Tout ce dessin fut fait par un peintre fameux appelé maître Gillio Mechelaon, lequel passa de longues années en Italie, et était Flamand de Malines”; Baschet 1861, p. 412. This line is omitted from the transcription and discussion of the documents given in Hoogewerff 1921.
  90. Delmarcel in Cremona 1987, pp. 51–52. For an alternative interpretation of the evidence, see Bandera 1987, pp. 78, 86.
  91. T. Campbell 1994, pp. 28, 31; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 241–47; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 187–88.
  92. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 155–62; T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 173–75.
  93. E. Duverger 1993, pp. 169–71. On the strength of images and descriptions published by Ffoulke 1913, pp. 80–87, Delmarcel (1999a, p. 131) suggests that the appearance of this set may be partly recorded by tapestries formerly in the Ffoulke collection and now at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.
  94. Göbel 1923, p. 426; Roethlisberger 1972; E. Duverger 1993, p. 171.
  95. For bibliography, see Dacos in Grove 1996, vol. 17, pp. 895–97.
  96. Ibid., p. 896.
  97. “[I]s geraempt ende gesloten dat men meesteren Peeteren De Kempeneer, schildere, van der stadtgoederen jaerlycx sal betalen ende vuytrecken de somme van vyftich Rinsguldenen, gelyck meester Michiel Van Coxcyen gehadt heeft voor zynen salaris van dat hy aenveert heeft tmaken van de patroonen voor de tappissiers deser stadt, ende dat op sulcke conditien als men hem geven sal”; text from Delmarcel 1981a, p. 155.
  98. Calberg 1962; Delmarcel 1981a; E. Duverger in Ghent 1987, pp. 106–15.
  99. Dacos 1988; Delmarcel 1988.

## The Conversion of Saul

*Modello* for the tapestry in the *Story of Saint Paul*  
Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1529–30  
Pen with brown wash and white heightening on paper  
25.8 x 41.5 cm (10 1/8 x 16 1/4 in.)  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Dyce 190)

PROVENANCE: Before 1869, Alexander Dyce collection;  
1869, bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

REFERENCES: Dyce Collection 1874, p. 32, no. 190;  
Marlier 1966, p. 317; Bauer in Halbtorn 1981, pp. 42–43.

## Paul before Agrippa

*Modello* for the tapestry in the *Story of Saint Paul*  
Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1529–30  
Pen with brown wash and white heightening on paper  
25.5 x 49 cm (10 x 19 1/4 in.)  
Inscribed *Peter von Aelst*  
Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna (7851)

PROVENANCE: Acquired at unknown date by Duke  
Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822; founder of the  
collection of the Graphische Sammlung Albertina).

REFERENCES: Marlier 1966, pp. 311–12; Bauer in  
Halbtorn 1981, pp. 49–51.

REFERENCES FOR THE STORY OF SAINT PAUL  
SERIES: Baldass 1920, nos. 17–20; Marlier 1966,  
pp. 310–23; Cavallo 1967, pp. 98–103; Durian-Ress 1981;  
Bauer in Halbtorn 1981, pp. 37–54; Schneebalg-Perelman  
1982, pp. 206–7; Junquera de Vega and Herrero  
Carretero 1986, pp. 230–35; Munich 1989, pp. 23–25.

Depicting the principal events of Paul's life, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (chaps. 7–28), the *Story of Saint Paul* series comprises nine scenes. Attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst on stylistic grounds, the sequence has traditionally been dated about 1534. However, evidence of various kinds indicates that the design may have been conceived some years earlier. Although three scenes have subjects in common with Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles*, the

stronger influence on these designs appears to have been the *Deeds of Scipio* by Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni, which perhaps originated, at least in part, during the early 1520s (see pp. 341–49). Coecke may have had access to drawings for the *Scipio* panels or copies of these sheets during a journey to Italy in the mid-1520s or in Brussels in the mid- to late 1520s. With its dynamic figures, unusual viewpoints, and attention to details of setting and costume, the *Story of Saint Paul* design represents an extraordinary tour de force by the young Netherlandish artist. If the earlier dating indicated here is correct, it places the *Saint Paul* series in the same period as Bernaert van Orley's innovative *Battle of Pavia* and *Hunts of Maximilian* series. Such a dating suggests that Coecke played a much more important role than generally recognized in the early development of the narrative and compositional mode that dominated Netherlandish tapestry design during the next thirty years.

### Description of the Conversion of Saul

The drawing, a *modello* for a panel in the *Story of Saint Paul*, depicts the moment of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (9:3–8). Saul, whose posture is inspired in part by the figure of Diogenes in Raphael's *School of Athens* in the Vatican and in part by that of Heliodoros in the *Expulsion of Heliodoros*, also in the Vatican, lies in the center of a circular space defined by the rearing and stampeding horses of the centurions who participate in the drama. While the *Conversion of Saul* is one of the three scenes in the *Saint Paul* series that repeat subjects treated in Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles*, the character of its design is markedly different from that of the Italian master. Although the Christ figure in the sky, Saul's prone position on the ground, and the explosive force with which the centurions' horses move away from the central figure recall elements of the Raphael design (cat. no. 23), Coecke expanded the scene to include many more figures. In addition, he replaced Raphael's strong diagonals and frontal composition with swirling forms and a raised viewpoint. Contributing to the sense of centrifugal movement

created by Coecke are the billowing cloaks of the horsemen and the disposition of the strong chiaroscuro that models the foreground figures. Coecke's composition could not have been conceived without the model of the *Apostles* scene, yet his work is more closely tied to the *Deeds of Scipio* than to Raphael's design. In particular, the rearing horses in the foreground of Coecke's drawing are derived from counterparts in the *Battle of Zama* panels of the *Scipio* series, while the costumes of the centurions also appear to be based on the model provided by the *Scipio* designs. The soldier in the left foreground may reflect knowledge of an analogous figure in the Raphael-school fresco of *David and Goliath* in the Vatican Loggia.

A close rendition of this drawing, executed in a sketchier style, survives in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin. Marlier suggested that it is a preparatory sketch, although the absence of pentimenti or alterations to the design may indicate that it is a workshop copy of the *modello*.<sup>1</sup> Two cartoon fragments from this design survive in the British Museum.<sup>2</sup> The earliest surviving woven version is in the set now in Munich, which dates from the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

### Description of Paul before Agrippa

The drawing portrays Paul in the tribunal before Agrippa, defending himself against the charge of spreading heresy to the Gentiles in Jerusalem (Acts 25:23–27, 26:1–29). The viewer is placed at an oblique and slightly raised angle to the side of the tribunal, which is depicted as a pavilion supported by elaborately carved classical columns and open on three sides. Agrippa, his wife, Queen Berenice, and the prefect Pontius Festus are seated on a raised plinth at the back of the structure. Their varied expressions and gestures express their responses to the testimony of the apostle who stands before them, his arms raised in exclamation. Two lictors are seated in contorted postures at the front corners of the pavilion, and two others stand on its far side. A crowd of onlookers gathers around both sides of the building. Two subsidiary narratives appear to the left and right of the main scene. At the right Paul is arguing with the prefect Felix, Festus's





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predecessor. To the left the saint embarks for Rome with a group of prisoners. As Krönig first noted, the composition is loosely inspired by Raphael's *Conversion of the Proconsul* from the *Acts of the Apostles* series, while the figure of Paul in the central drama is reminiscent of that in the *Paul Preaching at Athens* from the same set.<sup>4</sup> However, the oblique viewpoint and the contorted poses of Berenice, Festus, and the two seated lictors have no precedent in Raphael's art and convey the restless energy characteristic of Coecke's work of the early 1530s. The drawing carries an old inscription, *Peter von Aelst*, at the base of the foremost column.

A version of this drawing, without the inscription, belongs to the Sankt-Annen-Museum, Lübeck. According to Marlier, the Lübeck drawing is lighter and more schematic than the present sheet.<sup>5</sup>

#### Artist, Date, and Patron

The circumstances in which the *Saint Paul* series was conceived, designed, and first woven are unknown, but a considerable amount of information about them can be deduced from the extant preparatory drawings, tapestries, and documents. The two preparatory drawings included in the exhibition belong to a group of ten that relate to six distinct scenes from the life of Saint Paul as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>6</sup> These designs in turn correspond to a number of fragmentary tapestry sets. Two early and incomplete sets, both dating from the 1530s or early 1540s, with borders that appear to be original to the design, are in Madrid and Vienna.<sup>7</sup> The former, which carries the weaver's mark of Willem de Pannemaker, derives from a seven-piece set first documented in the collection of Mary of Hungary in 1558. The provenance of the latter is unknown before it appeared in the 1765 will of Holy Roman Emperor Francis I. Individual panels from a third high-quality set of wool and silk with an unidentified weaver's mark survive in Copenhagen, Boston, and Detroit.<sup>8</sup> Finally, a complete nine-piece set, dating from the mid-sixteenth century, is extant in Munich. Although the panels of this last set are surrounded by borders that clearly postdate the initial design, their main fields appear to be woven from the original cartoons.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of these various tapestries and the ten extant preparatory drawings, we

can identify nine stylistically homogenous scenes, from the *Story of Saint Paul*: the Stoning of Stephen, the Conversion of Saul, the Sacrifice at Lystra, Paul Preaching at Philippi, the Burning of the Books at Ephesus, the Arrest of Paul, Paul before Agrippa, Paul Bitten by the Snake at Malta, and the Beheading of Paul (the last not mentioned in the Acts).<sup>10</sup>

The *von* in the inscription *Peter von Aelst* on the *Paul before Agrippa* drawing suggests a German hand (which may have written over an earlier inscription). Nevertheless, Friedländer, Marlier, and subsequent critics have agreed in attributing this sheet and the group of designs to which it belongs to Coecke.<sup>11</sup> The style of the compositions, the prominent classical architecture, and the manner in which they are drawn are entirely consistent with his other work of the late 1520s and early 1530s.

As noted above, three of the *Saint Paul* compositions repeat subjects that were included in the Raphael *Acts of the Apostles*, and the debt to Raphael is readily evident throughout the series, in the classical robes in which the figures are dressed, the rhetorical gestures with which the principal protagonists express themselves, the architectural settings for some of the scenes, and certain compositional motifs. However, the debt to Italian sources is not limited to the *Acts*. As noted in the description of the *Conversion of Saul*, echoes of frescoes in the Vatican Stanze combine with apparent knowledge of both the Loggia frescoes and the Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni designs for the *Deeds of Scipio*. Yet the landscapes and some of the figures in other scenes such as the *Stoning of Stephen* and the *Martyrdom of Paul* also demonstrate the pronounced influence of van Orley's *Passion* designs (cat. nos. 30–33).

The date at which the *Story of Saint Paul* was conceived has been the subject of much debate. Traditionally, most critics have placed the series in 1534 or shortly thereafter, largely on the basis of its pseudo-Eastern costume elements, which, they assumed, indicate that the designs were created after Coecke returned to the Netherlands from Constantinople in 1534.<sup>12</sup> Such a date would have allowed Coecke plenty of time to assimilate the various Italian influences apparent in the designs. However, other evidence suggests that the designs may have originated four or five years earlier. Durian-Ress proposed a dating before 1528 as

the set in Vienna does not carry the Brussels mark in the borders, but this is irrelevant because the lower guards are replacements.<sup>13</sup>

A more serious challenge to the traditional dating is provided by documents that show that on January 20, 1533 (new style) Francis I paid the Antwerp merchant Joris Vezeleer for a seven-piece set of tapestries with subjects corresponding to seven of the scenes in Coecke's nine-panel *Story of Saint Paul*.<sup>14</sup> Francis's group cannot be precisely identified because it was destroyed in 1797 along with most of his other precious tapestries.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, Schneebalg-Perelman assumed that it was woven after the Coecke designs and therefore posited a date of about 1528–29 for the conception of the series.<sup>16</sup> Bauer, however, defended the traditional dating of about 1534, theorizing that Francis I's set was woven from a different group of cartoons by another artist. In support of this argument she noted that Lancelot Blondeel is known to have designed a set of *Saint Paul* tapestries, and she reiterated that Coecke's series likely was conceived after he returned from Constantinople in 1534 because it includes pseudo-Eastern costumes.<sup>17</sup> In fact, both of Bauer's points are misleading. First, Blondeel's *Saint Paul* designs were for three pieces, not seven, and were made in 1534 at the behest of Louis de la Vallée (also known as Passay), commander of the Knights Tèmplar in Flanders, for production in a Bruges manufactory.<sup>18</sup> Second, models for all of the Eastern details in Coecke's designs—actually little more than the turbans worn by a small number of figures—would have been readily available to him in contemporary engravings, such as Jan Swart's 1527 *Süleyman and His Cortege*. Indeed, the background landscapes and costumes in Coecke's series display none of the realistic Eastern elements that make the 1553 *Customs and Fashions of the Turks*—the posthumously published volume of engravings after his designs—such a fascinating document. The absence of such details confirms that the designs were conceived before the artist's trip to Constantinople. Insofar as the landscape is concerned, Coecke's debt to van Orley's *Passion* scenes, particularly *Christ Carrying the Cross* (cat. no. 32), is much more pronounced than any supposed influence of eastern Mediterranean models.

Another objection to the early dating of Coecke's designs is predicated on the familiarity they show with the *Deeds of Scipio*, which are



traditionally assigned to about 1528. However, the *Scipio* set was in all probability conceived some years earlier. Thus Coecke could have seen the drawings for them during his visit to Rome in the mid-1520s or shortly after his return to the Netherlands from this trip.

While it is true that Francis's set could have been woven from drawings by another, unidentified, artist, there is circumstantial evidence that they were made after Coecke's designs. First, the set was supplied to Francis by Vezeleer, the wealthy Antwerp merchant who was closely involved with the tapestry trade and who would therefore no doubt have known Coecke. Second, and even more important, is an unpublished seventeenth-century inventory of the French royal tapestries that lists the subjects of Francis's *Saint Paul* set and shows that these coincide with seven of the nine subjects in Coecke's tapestries. Consequently, there seems little question that the French set was woven after Coecke's series.<sup>19</sup> If this is the case, it indicates that Coecke's designs must have been conceived no later than 1529–30, as Schneebalg-Perelman suggested.

This line of argument leads to the conclusion that Francis I purchased the first weaving of Coecke's series. Whether it was commissioned by Francis is unknown. Saint Paul was an especially attractive figure for adherents of the Protestant movement because of his evangelical activity and his emphasis on direct communication with God. Francis would surely have been interested in tapestries devoted to Paul's life as there was considerable interest in the saint's epistles among Protestant sympathizers at both the French and English courts.<sup>20</sup> While Francis may have commissioned the designs, the character of his other purchases at this date and the evidence of Vezeleer's entrepreneurial role in other tapestry series suggest that it is more probable that Vezeleer, finely tuned to the likely interests of his courtly patrons, ordered the cartoons from Coecke as a speculative venture.

Why Francis I's set included only seven pieces is unclear. Comparison between the subjects in the seven-piece sets belonging to Francis I and Mary of Hungary (as listed in the 1558 inventory of her goods) and the known extant designs (as represented by drawings and the later nine-piece set in Munich) reveals that the smaller sets lacked the *Stoning of Stephen* and the *Burning of the Books at Ephesus*.<sup>21</sup> The

first known set of nine pieces is that listed in the inventory of Henry VIII's tapestries, taken after his death in 1547. It is possible that the eighth and ninth scenes of this set were added to the original seven by Coecke specifically for Henry.

The date at which Henry acquired his set is undocumented, but it was probably sometime during the late 1530s, when analogies between the king and Saint Paul were especially apposite.<sup>22</sup> With the repudiation of the papacy and the institution in 1534 of the Act of Supremacy, Saint Paul became an especially resonant figure for English Reformers because he provided an alternative to Petrine authority. Similarly, Paul's teaching that we must render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's was a crucial dictum in Henry's efforts to reject papal jurisdiction.<sup>23</sup> For the more ardent Reformers the saint also provided a prototype for the role in which they wished to cast Henry, that is, as an evangelical disseminator of God's word. As such, the saint featured prominently on the title page of the Coverdale Bible, published in 1537. Here, below a succession of Old Testament patriarchs and New Testament apostles, Henry is shown, flanked by King David and Saint Paul, receiving a copy of the Bible from his clergy. The Coverdale Bible was not authorized and the title page cannot be taken as an officially sanctioned image; however, the fact that it was executed by Hans Holbein, with the probable knowledge of Henry's chancellor, Thomas Cromwell, himself a staunch Reformer, suggests that whoever conceived the design must have been aware that it would appeal to the king's taste.<sup>24</sup> With Cromwell's injunction of 1538 that a vernacular Bible should be placed in every parish church and the publication in 1539 of the Great Bible, the first English-language Bible authorized for general use, Henry effectively fulfilled the hopes of the radical Protestant faction. Circumstantial evidence that Henry's *Saint Paul* set was commissioned in exactly the same period the vernacular Bibles were gaining currency is provided by a Royal Wardrobe account that cites payment made between the end of September 1538 and the end of September 1539 to the royal tailors for lining a set of new "arras" (the term used in the English wardrobe records to describe gold-woven tapestry) called the *Acts of the Apostles*.<sup>25</sup> This could not refer to Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* because Henry's set of that design was

not delivered and lined until 1542. Instead, it probably relates to the nine-piece, gold-woven set of the *Story of Saint Paul* included in the Hampton Court inventory of 1547.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that the wardrobe account cites eleven pieces rather than nine is perhaps to be explained as a scribal error: the listing is clearly a copy of a working account, and as the eleven is written in roman numerals it seems likely that the scribe put the "i" after the "x" instead of before it. Although Henry's *Saint Paul* set disappeared in the eighteenth century, we can deduce from documentary evidence that it was an exceptionally fine weaving. At the Commonwealth sale following Charles I's execution it was valued at 3,065 pounds, making it one of the ten costliest sets in the collection.<sup>27</sup>

### The Cartoons

Fragments from the cartoons for the *Conversion of Saul* and the *Sacrifice at Lystra* survive in the British Museum, while a large fragment from one for the *Martyrdom of Paul* is in Brussels (fig. 171).<sup>28</sup> Remarkable for its size and state of preservation, this last provides fascinating evidence of Coecke's direct participation in the creation of the cartoons and counters claims, often made, that he, van Orley, and other contemporary masters limited their participation in tapestry production to the drawing of the preparatory designs. The Brussels cartoon is executed in charcoal and thin washes of body color on paper and bears a number of written instructions regarding colors, identified by Marlier as the words *gout* (gold), *blaeuw* (blue) and *grys* (gray). For these reasons Marlier assumed that the cartoon was carried out in semi-grisaille and that the indications of color were instructions to the weavers (thus fueling the assumption that the weavers played a decisive part in the choice of colors and the appearance of the end product).<sup>29</sup> Recent conservation of the cartoon and further study of it suggest that Marlier's conclusions were wrong. Careful inspection indicates that the sheet was originally fully colored with thin washes of body color and that it today seems to be predominantly blue and green in large part because the other tones have faded. As the design is highly idiosyncratic, it seems likely that the written instructions were meant for the guidance of the painters who colored the cartoon, which had been drawn at least in part by Coecke himself with

the rest executed by skilled assistants working from his designs. The extremely personalized character of the faces represented also suggests that the master may well have been responsible for these elements at the very least. That the drawing of the design commonly preceded and was a distinct process from the coloring of the cartoon in Netherlandish practice is provided by evidence relating to a set of cartoons for the *Story of Samson*, commissioned by Henry II of France. According to early seventeenth-century descriptions, these were only half-colored, work having stopped at the death of Henry in 1559 (see above, p. 401).<sup>30</sup>

1. Marlier 1966, pp. 316–17; F. Anzelewsky in Berlin 1975, pp. 116–17; Bauer in Halbturn 1981, pp. 42–43.
2. Marlier 1966, pp. 45, 320.
3. Durian-Ress 1981; Bauer in Halbturn 1981, pp. 42–43.
4. Krönig 1936, p. 88.

5. Marlier 1966, p. 312.
6. In addition to the drawings listed in Munich 1989, p. 24, there exists a *modello* for the *Sacrifice at Lystra*, which was purchased by the Getty Museum at Sotheby's, New York, January 27, 1999, no. 16.
7. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 230–35 (Madrid); Halbturn 1981 (Vienna).
8. Cavallo 1967, pp. 98–103.
9. Durian-Ress 1981.
10. Cavallo 1967, pp. 102–3; Durian-Ress 1981, p. 233.
11. Marlier 1966, p. 312 (with bibliog.); Bauer in Halbturn 1981, pp. 37–54.
12. Marlier 1966, p. 323 (with bibliog.); Delmarcel 1999a, p. 127, dates it ca. 1535–40.
13. Bauer in Halbturn 1981, p. 38.
14. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS fr. 15,628, no. 427; *Catalogue des actes 1887–1908*, vol. 2, p. 298, no. 5291; Cox-Rearick 1996, pp. 367, 468, n. 25.
15. Guiffrey 1888.
16. Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, p. 260; Schneebalg-Perelman 1982, p. 206.
17. Bauer in Halbturn 1981, p. 38.
18. Göbel 1923, pp. 497–98; E. Duverger in Bruges 1987, p. 83.
19. In this inventory, in the Archives de l'Oise, the seven

pieces were described as follows: “La conversion de St Paul,” “Le sacrifice que l'on veut faire à St Paul et à St Barnabé qui deschire leur vestements,” “St Paul qui presche l'Evangile à Lidie et sa famille,” “St Paul mis en prison,” “St Paul plaide sa cause devant Festus, Agripa et Bérénice,” “Naufrage de St. Paul à Malta,” and “La décolation de St Paul.” I thank Isabelle Denis for providing me with a partial transcription of this document. She plans to publish a full annotated transcription in the future.

20. M. Dowling in Greenwich 1991, pp. 107–10.
21. Beer 1891, p. CLXII. The inventory lists the first two or three words in the cartouches of Mary of Hungary's set, which can be used to identify the subjects by comparing them with extant tapestries.
22. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 217, 220, 222–24.
23. String 1996, pp. 35–41, 105.
24. Ibid., pp. 101–6; Walker 1996, pp. 85–88.
25. Public Record Office, MS E 101/423/10, fol. 74.
26. Starkey 1998, p. 268.
27. Millar 1972, p. 158.
28. Marlier 1966, pp. 44–45, 319–20.
29. Ibid., p. 318.
30. Delmarcel in Cremona 1987, p. 51.

## 47.

### *The Triumph of Lust*

From a seven-piece set of the *Seven Deadly Sins*  
Design by Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1532–33  
Woven in Brussels, ca. 1542–44  
Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
459 x 832 cm (15 ft. ¾ in. x 27 ft. 3⅞ in.)  
8 warps per cm  
Brussels mark (left end of bottom selvage);  
unidentified weaver's mark (bottom of right side  
of selvage)  
Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid  
(TA-22/2, 10004089)

PROVENANCE: 1544, purchased by Mary of Hungary from Pieter van der Walle; 1549, exhibited at castle of Binche on the occasion of visit of Charles V and his son, Philip; 1558, listed in a posthumous inventory of collection of Mary of Hungary; 1598, recorded in a posthumous inventory of Philip II; by descent in the Spanish royal tapestry collection and listed in the inventories of Philip III (1621), Philip IV (1666), Charles II (1701–3), Philip V (1717), Ferdinand VI (1751), Charles III (1789), Ferdinand VII (1815).

REFERENCES: Valencia de Don Juan 1903, pp. 29–31, 97–106; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 65–67, 71–73; d'Hulst 1960, pp. 203–12; Marlier 1966, pp. 331–42; Steppe 1969b; Bauer and Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 55–99; Schneebalg-Perelman 1982, pp. 207, 210–11; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 150–54 (with bibliog.); van den Boogert in Utrecht and 's Hertogenbosch 1993, pp. 291, 292, 295.

The *Triumph of Lust* is one of a seven-piece set of the *Seven Deadly Sins* (of which four tapestries survive), purchased by Mary of Hungary in 1544. Reinterpreting a long-standing medieval fascination with the conflict between the Vices and Virtues, the series places an eclectic selection of exemplary figures in a Renaissance setting, a sequence of triumphal cars. The series is unique among sixteenth-century tapestries in having a manuscript description of its complex

iconography survive, in Madrid.<sup>1</sup> Although this is a midcentury text, not the original libretto for the design of the series, it provides important information. According to its title, the manuscript was made for the master weaver Willem de Pannemaker, whose cipher appears on two of the four extant sixteenth-century sets of this series—including the three other pieces in Mary of Hungary's set. The text also specifies that “maistre pierre van aelst peintre d'anvers” made the designs and the overall plan (“patrons et ordonnances”). This attribution is supported by the close resemblance between the style of the tapestry designs (especially the contorted and frenetic figures, the fiery atmospheric effects, and the wide landscapes with distant city views) and Pieter Coecke van Aelst's contemporary work in both tapestry and other figurative media. A tour de force of imaginative design,



the ensemble has long been recognized as one of Coecke's masterpieces in the tapestry medium.

#### *Description and Iconography*

Each of the seven tapestries in the series depicts the triumph of one of the Seven Deadly Sins (the other six show Gluttony, Wrath, Envy, Covetousness, Sloth, and Pride). In each, the sin is represented as a winged female sitting on a triumphal car processing from left to right, accompanied by appropriate biblical, mythological and historical figures, in a deep landscape with views of distant cities. Although the figures are not accompanied by inscriptions and their identity is not always immediately apparent from internal evidence, most can now be identified by referring to the Madrid description.<sup>2</sup>

Lust, represented with wings and a crown of roses (the flower of love), is seated on a triumphal car strewn with blossoms and musical instruments. She admires herself in a mirror (the symbol of vanity and seduction) held in one hand while lifting a golden chalice in the other, an allusion to the "cup of abominations" of the Whore of Babylon in the Apocalypse of Saint John (17:4). The chariot is drawn by a monstrous seven-headed animal that corresponds to the description of the beast in the Apocalypse (13:1–2). Lust's chariot trails the flames of hell in its wake as well as, according to the Madrid description, Voluptuousness and Carnal Pleasure, who ensnare "many in kisses and vicious embraces, attracted by transitory desire and mortal delectation."<sup>3</sup> Within the flames are a variety of monsters inspired by the visionary work of Hieronymus Bosch. Two couples dally in the heart of the fire, blind to the inferno about to engulf them. A woman, possibly a personification of Inconstancy, runs alongside the chariot gesticulating as the wheels crush those who have fallen prey to the effects of Lust.<sup>4</sup>

The Madrid description identifies the woman throwing herself upon her sword as Thisbe, who, according to Ovid, committed suicide when she discovered that her lover, Pyramus, had killed himself in the mistaken belief that she had been eaten by a lion (*Metamorphoses* 4:55–166). Another of the figures run over by the chariot is Semele, one of Zeus's lovers, who was killed when he appeared to her as a thunderbolt. The embryonic fruit of her union with

Zeus is visible on the ground between Hercules' legs; according to the legend, Zeus sewed the embryo into his leg until it reached full term, when it emerged as Dionysus. The chariot is preceded by Venus, mounted on a white horse. She holds a banner depicting a ram (signifying lust) and three magpies (symbols of Vanity, Dissipation, and Robbery).<sup>5</sup> With her right hand she supports a blindfolded Cupid, who is aiming an arrow at the figures who follow. The Madrid description names three of these as Aeneas, Paris, and Achilles. Venus is accompanied by a second mounted woman, identified in the Madrid text as Medea, another victim of deranged love; abandoned by Jason for Glauce, Medea killed her rival and her own sons by Jason (*Metamorphoses* 7:22–158). In the scene's immediate foreground are two male figures, one of whom is readily identifiable as Hercules. He qualifies for inclusion in the scene, being the father of fifty-two children born to the fifty daughters of King Thestius.<sup>6</sup> Clad in a lion skin, Hercules looks out at the viewer with an expression of anguish as he cradles his club, positioned to suggest a phallus, in both hands. His features are close enough to those in an engraved portrait of the artist Pieter Coecke (published by Lampsonius in 1572) to suggest that this may be an ironic self-portrait.<sup>7</sup> The equestrian figure to the right of Hercules is identified by the Madrid description as King Solomon, another figure deranged by Lust; in his old age he kept seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, who drew his heart from the path of faith (Kings 3:3–4). A winged figure hovering above the cortege, according to the description, represents Chastity awaiting her victory.

Beyond the cortege, Apollo can be seen reaching out for Daphne as she is transformed into a laurel tree to evade his clutches (*Metamorphoses* 1:452ff.). The Madrid description also mentions Lucretia, who killed herself after being raped by Tarquin, but she is not represented in the tapestry. A large city spreads out in the distance, identifiable from the Colosseum and an aqueduct as Rome—the modern Babylon, in the view of many Protestant sympathizers in Coecke's milieu and in Antwerp. The border is composed of rich garlands of fruit and flowers. A cartouche in the center carries an explanatory inscription: CVRA PLACENS, PRAEDVLCE MALVM, TRISTISQ: VOLVPTAS, HEV VESANA FVRENS PECTORA COECAT

AMOR (The pursuit of pleasure leads to misery and sorrow, for unbridled love blinds and deranges the heart).

When Coecke designed the *Seven Deadly Sins*, the conflict between the Vices and the Virtues was already an ancient subject in literature and art. First explored in detail in the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius (fl. 348–405), the theme had been elaborated in numerous literary and visual works during the late classical and medieval periods, as is discussed above in the context of the *Honors* tapestries.<sup>8</sup> During the early sixteenth century the recurring fascination of the struggle between base instincts and self-control manifested itself in many memorable series of allegorical tapestries. A *Redemption of Man* series was designed about 1500, and versions were woven at least twenty times during the following twenty years; a *Seven Deadly Sins* was also designed about 1510 and reproduced many times during the succeeding decade.<sup>9</sup> In reworking this age-old theme, Coecke blended into it the Renaissance concept of the triumph, which had been popularized in Northern figurative art—above all in tapestry representations of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* for which the most important precedent was the 1507–10 design series (see cat. no. 13). Another important forerunner must have been a series of the *Triumphs of the Seven Virtues* that apparently was designed in the late 1510s and that enjoyed considerable success during the next decade, as the survival of at least ten fragmentary sets attests.<sup>10</sup> Like the earlier Petrarchan series, it represented a sequence of triumphal cars, each standing for one Virtue and surrounded by exemplary figures who had embodied or failed to embody that Virtue. These tapestry series provided a model for the general structure of Coecke's series. As for the vivid characterization of the exemplary figures, a more immediate source may have been the large canvases, the *Triumph of Wealth* and the *Triumph of Poverty*, that Holbein painted for the Merchants' Hall of the Hanseatic Steelyard in London in 1532–33.<sup>11</sup> Since there were close links between the London merchant community and that in Antwerp, it is reasonable to suppose that Coecke had some familiarity with this contemporaneous work.

Although the Madrid text states that Coecke originated both the designs for this *Seven Deadly Sins* series and the program on which they are based, several authors have suggested that he





CVRA PLACENS PRADVICE  
HEV VESANA EVRENS



ALVM TRISTISQ; VOLVPTAS  
ECTORA COECAT AMOR





was aided in this enterprise by one of the humanist intellectuals resident in Antwerp, who was probably also responsible for the Latin couplets.<sup>12</sup> As Steppe has commented, the large cast of characters probably drew on manuscript lists of exemplary figures known to have circulated among Northern rhetoricians in this period.<sup>13</sup>

The text mentions a number of figures that do not appear in the final design. Nor do many of the figures in the *modelli* have identifying attributes. Therefore it seems likely that the Madrid description, with its numerous highly specific identifications, was following an earlier written description—perhaps the original libretto—from which Coecke may have deviated in a number of ways both in composing the *modelli* and in elaborating the final cartoons.

#### Artist and Date

The design of this series was first attributed to Pieter Coecke by Friedländer, whose idea found universal acceptance among subsequent critics.<sup>14</sup> The attribution was confirmed by the discovery of the Madrid manuscript, which specifically mentions the name of the designer, “Maistre pierre van aelst, peintre d’Anvers.”<sup>15</sup>

Four preparatory drawings for the series are known; of them only one, that for the *Triumph of Sloth* (École des Beaux-Arts, Paris), is generally considered to be in Coecke’s hand. A duplicate of it (Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick), a drawing for the *Triumph of Lust* (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven), and a fragmentary drawing for the *Triumph of Pride* (Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt; fig. 172) are generally thought to be careful workshop copies of Coecke’s original *modelli*.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that the Frankfurt drawing carries the date 1537 has encouraged a theory that the series was designed in the mid-1530s. The assumption seemed strengthened by the inclusion of a portrait of Süleyman the Magnificent in the *Triumph of Sloth* drawing, suggesting to previous commentators that the design was produced after Coecke returned from Constantinople in 1534.

However, as with the *Saint Paul* series, an earlier dating may be more correct. The accounts of Henry VIII’s Department of the Wardrobe record a payment for the lining of a set of *Seven Deadly Sins* in the year between Michaelmas 1535 and Michaelmas 1536. Only one

set of tapestries on this subject is listed in the inventory taken after Henry’s death in 1547,<sup>17</sup> and thus it is very likely to be the set referred to in the 1535–36 account, which would provide the date of its entry into the English royal collection. Tapestries were generally lined as soon as they were delivered, partly to strengthen them and partly to provide a support for the hooks by which they were suspended.<sup>18</sup> This very high-quality set (one of the most valuable sets when the royal collection was appraised in the mid-seventeenth century, following Charles I’s execution), can in turn be identified without doubt as a set of the Coecke design series, because one piece from it survived in the royal collection until the late nineteenth century (now Morgan Library, New York).<sup>19</sup> The set would probably have taken some eighteen months to make, and the design and preparation of the cartoons for the series may have taken another year. Therefore, if Henry VIII acquired a set of this subject between September 1535 and September 1536, the designs must have been conceived at least two years earlier than previously assumed, that is, before Coecke’s trip to Turkey. Circumstantial support for this earlier dating is provided by the similarity of the female figures at the right of the *Sloth modello* to those in a signed allegorical drawing by Coecke (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam) inscribed 1529 on the reverse.<sup>20</sup> It is a mistake to assume that the inclusion of a portrait of Süleyman the Magnificent dates the set to after Coecke’s trip to Constantinople; the portrait is formulaic and was probably drawn from contemporary engravings.

#### Patron and Weaver

Mary of Hungary purchased the *Seven Deadly Sins* set to which this work belonged from Pieter van der Walle in 1544, for the sum of 2,752 pounds (which suggests that the set was woven ca. 1542–44).<sup>21</sup> In the same year she also acquired a set of the *Story of Scipio* from the Antwerp merchant Erasmus Schets (see cat. no. 43). These were just some of the numerous purchases she made in her own right during the late 1530s and the 1540s. The richness of her collection is spelled out in detailed accounts of the splendor of the castle of Binche made in 1549 during the visit of Charles V and

Prince Philip, on which occasion the *Seven Deadly Sins* adorned the great hall.<sup>22</sup>

As discussed above, Pieter van der Walle, the Antwerp merchant who sold the *Seven Deadly Sins* to Mary, played a leading role in the supply of Brussels tapestries to many of the most important courts of the day, including those of Henry VIII, Cosimo de’ Medici, and Philip of Spain (later Philip II). It is possible that van der Walle commissioned the cartoons of the *Seven Deadly Sins* from Coecke’s workshop as a speculative venture, just as he may have been responsible for commissioning the *Story of the Creation* cartoons from Coecke’s workshop sometime in the 1540s (of which the first known weaving was sold by van der Walle’s son, Jan, to Cosimo de’ Medici in 1551).<sup>23</sup> Mary’s set of the *Seven Deadly Sins* was woven in two workshops, that of Willem de Pannemaker (whose mark appears on three of the four extant pieces) and another that is unidentified (its mark appears on cat. no. 47). The relationship between the van der Walle merchants and Pannemaker was evidently close. Pannemaker was also the weaver of the *Romulus and Remus* series that Jan van der Walle sold to Philip of Spain in 1550, and the cartoons of this series, too, appear to have belonged to the van der Walle company, since Pieter van der Walle had sold a set of the same subject to Henry VIII before 1547.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the sets made for Henry VIII and Mary of Hungary, two other high-quality sixteenth-century sets of the *Seven Deadly Sins* survive, one in the Spanish royal collection (Patrimonio Nacional) and the other in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum).<sup>25</sup> The former, of which only six pieces are extant, belonged to the count of Egmont, but it was appropriated by the duke of Alba following Egmont’s execution in 1568 and subsequently presented to Philip II.<sup>26</sup> Instead of the flower-and-palm border of the earlier sets, this one has figurative medallions (in the center of the lower border) and herms (in the lateral borders). The same unidentified weaver’s mark that is on catalogue number 47 appears on all pieces in this set. The set in Vienna is complete; its original owner is unknown. Dating from the 1550s, it is distinguished by its borders, which feature elaborate grotesques in the style of Cornelis Floris and Cornelis Bos.<sup>27</sup> All seven pieces of this set carry the mark of Willem de Pannemaker.







1. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, MS 6015; transcribed in Halbturn 1981, pp. 91–99.
2. Bauer and Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 60–75, esp. pp. 72–74, for the iconography of the *Triumph of Lust*.
3. Halbturn 1981, p. 94.
4. Bauer and Steppe in Halbturn 1981, p. 74.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
6. *Ibid.*
7. For the portrait, see Schneeberg-Perelman 1982, p. 190.
8. For further bibliography, see Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 77–82, and Mechelen 2000, pp. 18–20.
9. For the *Redemption of Man* series, see Cavallo 1993, pp. 421–45; for the earlier *Deadly Sins* series, see Steppe in Brussels 1976, pp. 100–117.
10. Delmarcel 1979; Souchal 1979.
11. Rowlands 1985, pp. 83–84, 223–24.
12. Bauer and Steppe in Halbturn 1981, p. 57.
13. Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 77–82.
14. Friedländer 1917, p. 88.
15. Halbturn 1981, p. 91.
16. D’Hulst 1960, p. 211; Marlier 1966, pp. 335–36, 338; Haverkamp-Begemann and Logan 1970, pp. 260–61, no. 491.
17. Starkey 1998, p. 180, no. 8991.
18. T. Campbell 1998a, p. 157.
19. T. Campbell 1994, pp. 26–27, 30, n. 41.
20. Marlier 1966, pp. 88–90.
21. Finot 1892, p. 243.
22. Van den Boogert in Utrecht and ’s Hertogenbosch 1993, pp. 291–99.
23. Meoni 1989.
24. T. Campbell 1998c, pp. 45–46, 50, n. 21.
25. Bauer and Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 55–75; Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 77–89.
26. Steppe in Halbturn 1981, p. 85.
27. Bauer and Steppe in Halbturn 1981, pp. 57–59.

48.

## *The Sacrifice of Isaac*

From a ten-piece set of the *Story of Abraham*  
 Conceived by Bernaert van Orley (?), ca. 1540; designed  
 and cartoons executed by Pieter Coecke van Aelst and  
 other, unidentified artists, ca. 1540–41 (?)  
 Woven Brussels, workshop of Willem de Kempeneer,  
 ca. 1541–43  
 Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
 488 x 792 cm (16 x 26 ft.)  
 8 warps per cm  
 Brussels town mark (left end of bottom selvage);  
 merchant’s mark (right end of bottom selvage)  
 The Royal Collection, Hampton Court Palace, lent by  
 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (1008)

PROVENANCE: Between September 9, 1543, and  
 September 9, 1544, received and lined by the English  
 Royal Wardrobe; 1547, recorded at Hampton Court in  
 the posthumous inventory of Henry VIII’s possessions;  
 stored at Hampton Court but periodically displayed for  
 key receptions and festivities at other sites during the  
 reigns of Elizabeth I and Charles I; 1649, valued at 8,260  
 pounds by the commissioners responsible for the inven-  
 tory and sale of Charles I’s possessions; 1654, reserved  
 for use of the Protector, Oliver Cromwell; 1685, hung  
 in Westminster Abbey for the coronation of James II;  
 1699, hung permanently in state apartments built for  
 William III at Hampton Court; 1841, this piece, with five  
 others of the set, transferred to Hampton Court Great  
 Hall (two others hung in the Royal Chapel at Saint  
 James’s Palace, London); 1922–27, stored and exhibited

at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; 1927, with  
 five other pieces, rehung in the Great Hall at Hampton  
 Court, where they have remained (the other four pieces  
 are hung elsewhere in the palace); 1944–46, this piece  
 conserved as part of a campaign for the whole set.

REFERENCES: W. G. Thomson 1906, pp. 218, 223,  
 267; W. G. Thomson 1914, p. 36; Hunter 1925, pp. 128,  
 133; Marillier 1962, pp. 7–11; Millar 1972, p. 158; F. P.  
 Thomson 1980, pp. 92, 102, 109; D. King 1989, pp. 312–13;  
 T. Campbell 1994, pp. 22–24, 26; T. Campbell 1998a,  
 pp. 237–49; T. Campbell 1998b, pp. 2, 29–30; Starkey  
 1998, p. 268; T. Campbell forthcoming.

CONDITION: Although the tones of the tapestry are  
 faded, the original color balance between the wool and  
 the silk is well preserved. Much of the gilt-metal thread  
 has tarnished, so large expanses that would originally  
 have appeared gold are now silvery gray. Four letters at  
 the bottom left of the inscription in the cartouche are  
 painted on, not woven into, the fabric; the reason is not  
 known, but it may reflect a mistake made by the  
 weavers.

Woven with a very high proportion of gilt-  
 metal-wrapped thread, the ten-piece *Story of*  
*Abraham* set at Hampton Court Palace is one of  
 the most sumptuous tapestry ensembles to sur-  
 vive from this or any other period. According

to a well-informed visitor to Hampton Court in  
 1598, it was said to be “the finest and most artis-  
 tic in England,”<sup>1</sup> and during Charles I’s reign it  
 was regularly taken to London to be hung in  
 the Banqueting House at Whitehall Palace for  
 important state receptions.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the  
 Commonwealth sale (1649–54) it received a  
 higher valuation than any other work of art in  
 the British royal collection, and despite Cardinal  
 Mazarin’s strenuous attempts to acquire the  
 set, it was eventually reserved for Cromwell’s  
 use; thus it was still in the royal collection at  
 the time of the Restoration.<sup>3</sup> Between 1699  
 and 1841 the tapestries adorned the state apart-  
 ments built for William III at Hampton Court  
 by Christopher Wren; six pieces were trans-  
 ferred to the Tudor Great Hall in 1841, when  
 the palace was opened to the public.<sup>4</sup> This  
 long-term exhibition was in marked contrast to  
 the careful husbandry the set had originally  
 received: during the time of the Common-  
 wealth sale, Mazarin’s agent described it as  
 “very well preserved, having only served for  
 ceremonial occasions.”<sup>5</sup>

Although modern historians have long rec-  
 ognized the richness of the Hampton Court



*Abraham* set, it has never been studied in detail. The loss of almost all the rest of Henry VIII's tapestry collection, combined with the lack of documentation on the date and circumstances by which the set entered the collection, has tended to obscure its true significance. New evidence, discussed below, suggests that Henry's set was probably the first weaving of this design and that he commissioned it about 1540–41 at the latest, perhaps as early as 1539. Much of the propaganda and official iconography generated by the Tudor court during the years of the Reformation was concerned to draw parallels between Henry and the Old Testament patriarchs, in order to substantiate his newly defined role as head of the English church and, in effect, patriarch to his own people. It seems likely that this costly set of tapestries was acquired to promote the same image. The story of Abraham and Isaac would have carried additional resonance for Henry at this time, since his long-awaited son and heir, Edward, was born in 1537; the theme of God's covenant with Abraham, continued through his son Isaac, offered a powerful prototype for the continuation of the "sacral" Tudor line.<sup>6</sup>

#### Description

The *Story of Abraham* set comprises ten scenes depicting the principal events of Abraham's life as narrated in chapters 12 through 24 of Genesis, especially those pertaining to his role as the founder of the Hebrew nation and the continuation of God's covenant with Abraham through his son Isaac. This tapestry, the seventh piece in the set, shows the sacrifice of Isaac as described in Genesis (22:2–18). As a test of Abraham's faith, God commanded him to take his only son, Isaac, into the land of Moriah and sacrifice him there on one of the mountains. After three days of travel, Abraham and Isaac arrived at the designated site. In the left foreground of this tapestry they are shown starting up the mountain, Isaac carrying wood for the sacrificial fire and Abraham the burning coals with which it would be lit. Isaac turns back toward his father, enacting the moment when, innocent of his father's intention, he asks, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" and his father replies, "God himself will provide a lamb for the burnt offering" (Genesis 22:7–8). Above, in the distance, Isaac is seen lying on a sacrificial altar, his hands bound to his side, as

Abraham lifts a knife to his throat. This action is arrested by the angel of the Lord, who, in an embellishment of the biblical text, grabs Abraham's forelock to get his attention as he speaks the Lord's words: "Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou any thing to him: now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me" (Genesis 22:12). Behind the scene a ram is visible at the edge of the wood; in the far distance (upper center of tapestry) Abraham offers it as a sacrifice in place of Isaac. The right foreground is occupied by the two servants and the mule that Abraham took with him on the journey. One of the servants turns and points toward the miraculous appearance of the angel, his posture based on that of a soldier in Michelangelo's cartoon for the *Battle of Cascina* fresco created for the Palazzo della Signoria, Florence, but never executed. In the wide landscape that is the setting for this episodic narrative, the vegetation and the craggy background mountains are delineated with great attention to detail—from the moss-covered stump surrounded by toadstools and ferns in the foreground to the tree roots hanging over a cliff in the center distance.

#### The Borders

Like the other pieces in the set, the tapestry's main scene is surrounded by a wide, elaborate border. At the top it contains a frieze decorated with a scrolling acanthus pattern, in which a central cartouche, depicted as a stretched animal skin, carries the inscription: ABRAHAM DIVINO ORACVLO IVBETVR IMMOLARE VNIGENITVM SVVM FILIVM ISAAC (Abraham, at God's command, sacrifices his only begotten son, Isaac). The other borders are divided by architectural niches and decorative elements into a series of compartments, three on each side and five below, each occupied by a figure identified by a Latin inscription. Counterclockwise from top left, they are: Constantia (Steadfastness), Testatio (Witness), Fides (Faith), Simplicitas (Candor), Obedientia (Obedience), Animi Promptitudo (Willingness of the Spirit), Immolatio (Sacrifice), Promissio (Promise), Spes (Hope), Promissio (Promise), and Benedictio (Blessing).

In all, 84 different personifications are featured in the borders of the complete *Abraham* set, some several times (though never in the same form), making a total of 110 figures. This placement of numerous figures in fanciful

architectural and grotesque border settings is, structurally speaking, inspired by the borders of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* (see pp. 187–203 and cat. no. 18). There, however, the borders relate to the central field only in a general way, while here the connection between the border personifications and the main *Abraham* scenes is more specific. Some border figures symbolize the primary event or theme of the central scene; others personify the virtues that the protagonists demonstrate, the opposing vices, or the consequences of practicing those virtues or vices. In the case of the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, the personifications reinforce the themes of trust and obedience, Abraham to God and Isaac to his father. Taken as an ensemble, the border personifications invite the viewer to consider the narrative as a meditation on Abraham's secular and religious virtues and, in the final scenes, on the qualities that characterize a dutiful son, a faithful servant, and a virtuous wife. More generally, they relate these qualities to the concepts of Fame and Honor (personifications that appear in the border of *Abraham Meeting Melchizedek*), which, according to the teachings of the *speculum principis* (mirror of princes), were the pinnacle of achievement for European rulers. While a long tradition existed of using tapestry as a medium for didactic schemes, the *Abraham* tapestries appear to be the first in which the borders were designed as an integral part of that program.<sup>7</sup>

#### Date and Patron

The circumstances in which the *Story of Abraham* series was conceived and designed, and Henry VIII acquired his rich weaving, are undocumented; until recently, the earliest known reference to Henry's set was a citation in the posthumous 1547 inventory, where it is described as "new Arras."<sup>8</sup> However, fresh evidence about the date that the set entered the collection has recently been found in an unpublished account book of the keeper of the Great Wardrobe, the department of the Tudor household responsible for the soft furnishings of the royal palaces. The entry for the year ending on Michaelmas (September 29) 1544 notes a payment to the royal tailors to line two sets of tapestry with canvas: one, "Augusto Cesere," of ten pieces, and the other, also of ten pieces, the *Story of Abraham*.<sup>9</sup> As only one ten-piece set on the theme of Abraham was listed in the 1547 inventory,



identification of the set that was being lined with that now at Hampton Court is certain. While theoretically the two sets cited in the wardrobe account might have been delivered to Henry's court in an earlier year and not lined until 1544, this is unlikely. Records on other new acquisitions indicate that tapestries were lined as soon as they were delivered, both to strengthen them and because the hooks from which they hung were attached to the lining rather than to the tapestries themselves. Therefore the *Caesar* and *Abraham* sets were probably delivered to the Great Wardrobe between September 29, 1543, and September 28, 1544. Since a set of this size would have taken two to three years to design and weave, we can conjecture that it must have been commissioned between 1540 and the end of 1541.

Considering the very high valuations that were historically placed on the *Caesar* set (now destroyed)<sup>10</sup> and the *Abraham* set, it is almost certain that they were specifically commissioned by the English king (that a workshop would have produced speculative weavings of such richness is highly unlikely). Although both series were subsequently duplicated for other patrons, an analysis of archival records and a comparison of surviving sets indicate that Henry owned the first weaving of both.<sup>11</sup> Was he responsible for commissioning the designs as well? In the absence of documentary evidence, answers to this question can only be conjectural. Henry certainly held no monopoly over the symbolism attached to either of these subjects. Francis I and Charles V were both compared to Caesar in contemporary literature and figurative works, and Abraham and Isaac were among the Old Testament prototypes invoked in decorations erected for the joyful entries staged for Charles when he visited the Netherlands with his son Philip in 1549.<sup>12</sup> But neither Francis nor Charles is known to have acquired a tapestry set on either subject. And, as noted above and below, for the English king in the late 1530s, Caesar and Abraham were particularly resonant figures.

Although Henry's *Caesar* set has not survived, its appearance can be reconstructed from information on duplicate weavings, such as the set acquired by Pope Julius III in the early 1550s (fig. 174), and from later weavings based in part on the earlier designs.<sup>13</sup> I have noted elsewhere











Detail of cat. no. 48

one reason why Caesar might have been an especially meaningful figure to Henry: a key argument buttressing his position, as the rift with Rome developed in the early 1530s, was that England had been recognized as an empire since ancient times, and that Henry, emperor in his own realm, rather than the pope, was the legitimate head of the English church.<sup>14</sup> In the 1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome, the statement “this realm of England is an Empire” became the basis for Henry’s assertion of secular and spiritual supremacy in England, and the claim received its definitive embodiment in the 1534 Act of Supremacy. In view of the role that this so-called Caesaropapist argument played in English politics during the 1530s, it is logical to

suppose that Henry’s acquisition of an enormous and sumptuous *Story of Caesar* tapestry set was intended to celebrate and affirm the parallels between himself and that former ruler of Britain—the primary exponent of the absolute authority he now claimed for himself.

Another line of thought may also have played a part in the *Caesar* purchase. Although in his career Caesar exemplified military genius and private and public virtues, his downfall provided a textbook demonstration of the pitfalls of power. In Thomas Elyot’s *The Boke Named the Governour*, a study of how best to educate a young prince (published at Henry’s wish in 1531), Caesar was cited frequently to point out exactly this dichotomy between achievement and weakness. On the one hand, Elyot held Caesar up as an example of the perfect model of industry and achievement and recommended his commentaries as appropriate reading for “princes of this realme of Englande.” On the other hand, Caesar’s history was offered as a case study of the tyrannical ruler brought down by his own failings, in particular his neglect of his advisers’ counsel (the subject of the last scene in the *Caesar* set, fig. 174).<sup>15</sup> With such a prominent role being played by Caesar in Elyot’s work, it seems likely that the didactic aspect of a *Caesar* set appealed to Henry because it provided a humanist affirmation of the values that the Tudor kings upheld. A cycle representing the twenty-four caesars who successively ruled the Roman Empire also crowned an elaborate stucco *speculum principis* decoration that was undertaken in the interior courtyard of Nonsuch Palace in Surrey during the early 1540s, under the direction of the Italian artist Nicholas Bellin of Modena (fl. 1532–69).<sup>16</sup>

The resonance that the *Story of Caesar* apparently held for Henry and his court raises the question whether the *Abraham* set had a similar significance; this indeed seems to have been the case. During the early 1530s, Henry and his apologists furthered his cause by invoking not only imperial precedents but also precedents drawn from the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup> As the conflict with Rome widened, these legalistic comparisons were subsumed into a more personalized form of identification. Henry was a second Ezekiel, sent by heaven to reform abuses; a modern King David, delivering England from Goliath, the pope; a second Moses, leading England, a new Israel, out of bondage.<sup>18</sup> The pervasiveness

of this mentality is evident from works produced for Henry during the late 1530s. In Holbein’s illumination *Solomon and Sheba* (Royal Collection, Windsor), probably created as a New Year’s Day gift for Henry, the inscription conflates Henry with Solomon as God’s elected ruler, and Solomon’s features are similar to Henry’s.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in an illuminated Psalter prepared for the king’s private use by Jean Mallard in the late 1530s, King David is depicted with Henry’s features. The king’s annotations in the Psalter reveal the concentration with which he studied the text and related his own experience to that of David.<sup>20</sup> The cover plate of the Great Bible published in 1539 provides a further variation. In the top scene Henry kneels on a hillside with his crown before him, in direct communication with God; below he hands the Bible to his clergy and nobility, who in turn communicate the Word to the general populace.<sup>21</sup> Here, in the one print of his reign that was unquestionably conceived by Henry for widespread dissemination, comparisons and analogies have been discarded in favor of an image in which the king is shown quite literally as a prophet to his own people.

Although Henry’s self-identification with Old Testament patriarchs has received considerable attention in recent years, surprisingly, the *Abraham* set has never been considered in this light. Yet such thinking must be exactly what underlay the commission. Abraham, founder of the Hebrew nation and first of the great patriarchs, was the Old Testament model most resonant for Henry as he sought to establish a new Church of England centered on the Tudor dynasty. Chosen for a covenant with God, Abraham served as a prototype for the exalted role Henry asserted for himself: he was the consecrated king of England, the spiritual and secular leader of his people. As already noted, the birth of Prince Edward in 1537 gave Henry an heir, just as Genesis established Abraham’s undisputed succession through Isaac. The borders of the *Abraham* tapestries expanded the analogies between Abraham and Henry, Isaac and Edward, into a broader affirmation of the moral values embodied by the Tudor kingship.

Did Henry commission the designs of the *Caesar* and *Abraham* sets? What has just been said about the importance of these subjects for him and the fact that he owned the first weavings of the designs might be taken as circumstantial





Detail of cat. no. 48

evidence in the affirmative. It should be noted, however, that neither design carries personal insignia, devices, portraits, or specific iconography supporting this assumption. (Of course, no Netherlandish artist or merchant was likely to present imagery overtly supportive of Charles V's principal rival, especially since eminent artists and weavers had already been subjected to religious persecution in relation to the Lutheran preacher Claes van der Elst in 1527.) Since as subjects Caesar and Abraham might easily appeal to patrons other than Henry, caution must be exercised before conclusions are drawn. Moreover, the merchant who seems to have owned the cartoons for both series during the 1540s, Willem de

Kempeneer, was one of the most entrepreneurial merchant-weavers of the day. He speedily embarked on subsequent weavings of the *Abraham* design (a lower-quality edition was sold to Bertran de la Cueva, third duke of Albuquerque, as early as 1544),<sup>22</sup> seemingly unrestricted in his ability to reproduce the design for other patrons. Perhaps Kempeneer commissioned the *Abraham* designs as a speculative venture.

This does not rule out the possibility that the design was conceived with Henry in mind. Kempeneer enjoyed close links with the community of Antwerp merchants, many of whom dealt directly with Henry VIII's leading advisers. An even more direct link with Henry's court is

indicated by the fact that Henry's chief tapestry agent, the royal "arras-man," Jan Mostinck (or Mosting), gave a written deposition supporting Kempeneer when the latter was accused of fraudulent practices in 1539.<sup>23</sup> Thus it seems plausible that Kempeneer had an intimate knowledge of the sorts of designs and subject matter that would appeal to the English king and that he commissioned the designs based on this knowledge. Moreover, the evident link between Kempeneer and Mostinck makes it possible that full-scale cartoons for the *Abraham* set or the *Caesar* set, or both, were developed after the English king had commissioned weavings of these designs, perhaps on the basis of

*modelli*. Indeed, the king and his advisers might even have been involved in the choice of subjects in the allegorical border personifications. Although the idea that the designs developed out of some such intercourse is highly speculative, it is certainly supported by the parallels between these subjects and the rhetoric employed by Henry and the Reformation movement.

#### Designer

Since the origin of the *Abraham* series is undocumented, its attribution is dependent on stylistic analysis. There has been great divergence among scholars on the subject of who was responsible for the design, with much of the discussion focused on the duplicate weavings in Madrid and Vienna. With the exception of Hunter, who ascribed it to Giulio Romano, most early twentieth-century commentators attributed the design to Bernaert van Orley, and many scholars still agree.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the rich landscapes, elaborate architectural settings, multiple narratives, and rhetorical gestures and facial characteristics of many of the figures all strongly recall his tapestry designs. However, the *Abraham* works are characterized by an elongation of the figures and a monumentality of composition, perhaps reflecting an awareness (at second hand) of Michelangelo's work, and these qualities are absent from design series such as the *Battle of Pavia* and the *Hunts of Maximilian*, classic examples of van Orley's work. Presumably on the basis of this disparity, the influential surveys of van Orley's tapestry designs by Farmer and Ainsworth excluded the *Abraham* series from his canon.<sup>25</sup> Farmer suggested that the design might instead be assigned to van Orley's pupil Michiel Coxcie, as was first proposed by Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón in 1919. The attribution, which has since been accepted by Duverger in a recent summary of Coxcie's work as a tapestry designer,<sup>26</sup> has considerable merit. The figures in Coxcie's *First Parents*, *Noah*, and *Tower of Babel* series (of which examples survive at Wawel Royal Castel, Kraków) share many poses and facial characteristics with the *Abraham* designs. The three-quarter profile heads of Abraham are especially close to those of God and Noah in the Wawel sets.

Yet two factors encourage caution in attributing the *Abraham* designs to Coxcie. First, the elongation of the figures and slightly mannered

disproportion of their feet and hands set them apart from the idealized human forms in the *First Parents* and *Noah* series. Second, the architectural settings, which are florid and rather heavy-handed, differ in character from the architectural detailing in paintings and stained-glass window designs executed by Coxcie in the early 1540s. Perhaps for these reasons, the intervention of a third artist, Pieter Coecke van Aelst, has recently been suggested by Delmarcel,<sup>27</sup> an attribution that has much to recommend it. Many postures and facial features in the *Abraham* designs echo those in earlier Coecke series, particularly the *Story of Joshua*, and the wide landscape settings are similar to ones in Coecke's tapestry designs and paintings.

While this question requires more detailed discussion than is possible here, the basis for future assessment must surely be the project on which van Orley, Coxcie, and Coecke are all known to have participated between 1537 and 1543: the designs for the stained-glass windows in the transept and the chapel of Saint-Sacrement de Miracle in the Cathedral of Saint Gudule, Brussels.<sup>28</sup> Remarkably, these important comparative works have not been considered yet in relation to either the *Caesar* or the *Abraham* designs.<sup>29</sup> Van Orley began the assignment with designs for two windows in the transept, dated 1537 and 1538, depicting Charles V and Isabella of Portugal, and Mary of Hungary and her husband Louis II Jagellon, in elaborate architectural settings. Subsequently Charles V commissioned van Orley to design five windows for the chapel of the Holy Sacrament, with portraits of Habsburg donors below and scenes of the legend of Saint-Sacrement above. In the first of them, completed in 1540, above images of Francis I and Eleanor of Austria is depicted the murder of Jonathas, the Jew who according to local legend had solicited Jean of Louvain to steal the Host from the cathedral. All three windows completed from van Orley designs have close parallels with the *Abraham* and *Caesar* series. In the Charles V window in the transept, the woman holding a crown behind the kneeling figures closely resembles the women depicted in the *Departure of Eliezer* in the *Abraham* series. Similarly, the protagonists in the *Murder of Jonathas* have postures and facial characteristics close to those in the *Assassination of Caesar* tapestry. More generally, the architectural frames utilized in all three windows incorpo-

rate a vocabulary very similar to that employed in the *Abraham* and *Caesar* designs (fluted pilasters, decorated plinths, coffered ceilings, and carved medallions), and many other decorative details are close to those in the *Abraham* designs. For instance, the scrolling acanthus filigree that decorates the interior of the arch in the Charles V window reappears on the candelabra in the *Circumcision of Isaac* tapestry, while the Francis I window incorporates two trompe l'oeil niches with allegorical figures very similar in type to those in the borders of the *Abraham* series.

If the stylistic analogies between the Saint Gudule windows and the *Abraham* and *Caesar* designs suggest van Orley's initial involvement in the conception of the designs, they also provide clues about how these designs may have been developed by other artists. Following van Orley's death in January 1541, Coxcie was commissioned to paint a cartoon for the next window, depicting John III and Catherine of Portugal, from van Orley's preliminary design,<sup>30</sup> which was among the drawings that the cathedral authorities had purchased from van Orley's beneficiaries. The window, dated 1542 and executed from Coxcie's cartoon, is consistent in format and character with van Orley's earlier designs. Moreover, notably, it contains a coffered ceiling much like that in the *Circumcision of Isaac*. A preparatory design for this window also appears to have been executed by Coecke, presumably as a competitive bid, but it was not followed, and subsequently Coxcie provided the design for the other windows.<sup>31</sup> Although they follow the iconographic program that van Orley had already established, their architectural details have an austere character that distances them from the more florid, decorative van Orley designs.

Since there are many close links between the *Abraham* and *Caesar* designs and the Saint Gudule windows, the question arises, were the two groups of works produced under similar conditions? Did van Orley in both cases devise the iconographic schemes and some of the preliminary designs before his death, and were these then completed and developed as full-scale cartoons under the supervision of Coecke or Coxcie? While this question cannot yet be answered, there is some indication that such was the case with the *Caesar* series, since



the *Assassination of Caesar* (fig. 174) is close stylistically to van Orley's *Murder of Jonathas* window, while a *modello* for another scene of the set, the *Departure of Caesar*, appears to be in Coecke's hand.<sup>32</sup> As Forti Grazzini has noted, other scenes in the *Caesar* set, some only known in later weavings from second- and third-generation cartoons, also reflect Coecke's work.<sup>33</sup>

So far as the *Abraham* series is concerned, reason to think that this project, too, was developed by an artist other than van Orley is provided by a pen-and-ink drawing of the *Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek* (Fondation Custodia, Paris).<sup>34</sup> While replicating the posture of Melchizedek and certain other figures and details in the corresponding scene in the *Abraham* tapestry series, it places the episode within a wide landscape rather than the architectural setting of the tapestry design. Another difference is that Abraham wears the costume of a Roman soldier. Attributed by Lugt to Coecke, this drawing was reattributed by Boon to Coxcie on the basis of its stylistic similarity to a group of five drawings of the *Triumphs of Petrarch* (see fig. 193), one of which carries Coxcie's monogram.<sup>35</sup> The penmanship is certainly closer to Coxcie's than to any drawing by Coecke. Although this could have been a preliminary sketch for the scene in the tapestry series that was then reworked into the form in which it was eventually produced, an alternative scenario is that the sketch was made by Coxcie based on a rough design by van Orley, as part of a bid to complete the project (akin to Coecke's sketch for the Saint Gudule windows). Certainly, the design of the *Abraham and Melchizedek* scene in the completed tapestry appears much closer to Coecke's work than to Coxcie's, but the elements common to both the tapestry and the drawing suggest a common source of inspiration.

While the attribution of the *Abraham* (and *Caesar*) designs requires further analysis, it seems likely that the joint involvement of van Orley, Coecke, and Coxcie in the development of the Saint Gudule windows may hold the key to their appearance.

#### Workshop

Several of the tapestries in the set carry the Brussels mark and that of Willem de Kempeneer (erroneously identified as that of Willem de

Pannemaker by Marillier, a mistake that has been perpetuated in much of the literature relating to Hampton Court).<sup>36</sup> As discussed elsewhere, Kempeneer, one of the leading merchant-weaver entrepreneurs of the 1530s and early 1540s, evidently played an important part in producing the tapestries sold to the courts of Francis I and Henry VIII, as evidenced both by documentation and by Jan Mostinck's testimony on his behalf in 1539. Although Kempeneer and the Dermoyen were found guilty of the charges of fraudulence, the high quality of surviving products from their workshops demonstrates that infractions did not plague all their work. Certainly the *Story of Abraham* tapestries are among the most technically proficient creations of the sixteenth century, as passages of weaving in the *Sacrifice of Isaac* panel attest (see, for example, details showing the foreground vegetation and the nap of the servant's fur bag). In their size and consistent quality, Henry VIII's *Abraham* tapestries strikingly demonstrate how many and how skilled were the weavers in Kempeneer's workshops—anonymous artisans responsible for the finest examples of Brussels's golden age of tapestry production.

1. Platter 1937, p. 202.

2. For example, the formalizing of the peace treaty with Spain in December 1630 (Public Records Office [henceforth PRO], MS LC5/132, fol. 216); the celebration of Saint George's Feast in April 1635 (PRO, MS LC5/134, fol. 56); the reception of the Moroccan ambassador in November 1637 (PRO, MS LC5/134, fol. 203); and the reception of the Spanish ambassador in 1640 (PRO, MS LC5/134, fol. 384).

3. Cosnac 1884, pp. 180, 182, 184, 194, 197, 199; Millar 1972, p. 158.

4. T. Campbell 1994, pp. 22–24, 26.

5. "[F]ort bien conservée, n'ayant jamais servi que dans les jours de cérémonies"; Cosnac 1884, p. 186.

6. The following analysis is based in part on T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 237–49. A more detailed publication on Henry VIII's *Abraham* series is in preparation by the present author.

7. My forthcoming article on the *Abraham* tapestries will contain a more detailed discussion of their border iconography; T. Campbell forthcoming.

8. Starkey 1998, p. 268.

9. PRO, MS E101/423/10, fol. 74.

10. For a reconstruction and discussion of Henry's *Caesar* set, see T. Campbell 1998b.

11. For a discussion on the precedence of Henry's *Caesar* set, see *ibid.*; for the precedence of his *Abraham* set, see T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 245–47, and T. Campbell forthcoming.

12. T. Campbell 1998a, p. 233; Jacquot 1960, pp. 445, 451.

13. T. Campbell 1998b; Forti Grazzini 1999b, pp. 159–64.

14. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 232–37; T. Campbell 1998b, pp. 32–36.

15. Rude 1992, p. 52.

16. Turquet 1983, *passim*, esp. pp. 322–31.

17. Elton 1972, pp. 171–216; String 1996, pp. 22–45.

18. T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 217–25.

19. String 1996, pp. 77–80; Walker 1996, pp. 89–92.

20. British Library, London, Royal MS 7D xiii. Tudor-Craig 1989, esp. p. 191; J. N. King 1989, pp. 83–85. For a discussion of the context in which Henry purchased a very expensive set of *Story of David* tapestries in 1528, see T. Campbell 1996b.

21. String 1996, pp. 106–18; Walker 1996, pp. 92–93.

22. The 1560 inventory of Cueva's collection lists a ten-piece set, said to have been purchased in Flanders in 1544, which in its subjects corresponds to the Hampton Court set. It is described as "rich," but the inventory makes no mention of silk or gold thread, features noted for other tapestries in the collection. The fate of this set is unknown; Rodríguez Villa 1883, p. 22.

23. Denucé 1936, pp. 18–19.

24. Friedländer 1909, p. 155; Baldass 1920, nos. 21–30; Hunter 1925, pp. 128, 133; Heinz 1963, pp. 186–88; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, p. 206; Forti Grazzini 1991b, pp. 72–73.

25. Farmer 1981, pp. 314–15; Ainsworth 1982, pp. 135 n. 2, 140–41 n. 45.

26. Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 102–3; E. Duverger 1993, p. 176.

27. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 124.

28. Vanden Bemden 1993; Vanden Bemden 2000, pp. 172–80.

29. For the discussion that follows, see Marillier 1962, pls. 1–10, for the *Abraham* tapestries; T. Campbell 1998b, for the *Caesar* tapestries; Vanden Bemden 1993 and Vanden Bemden 2000, for the Saint Gudule windows comparisons.

30. Vanden Bemden 1993, pp. 141–49; Vanden Bemden 2000, pp. 176–79.

31. Marlier 1966, p. 357; Vanden Bemden 2000, pp. 179–80.

32. Marlier 1966, pp. 300–301. T. Campbell 1998b, pp. 28, 30–32, for identification of the subject; in the latter the drawing is tentatively linked to the work of Léonard Thiry. In T. Campbell 1998a, pp. 271–73, I also considered the possible intervention of Nicholas Bellin of Modena. I now am inclined to accept the traditional attribution of the drawing to Pieter Coecke van Aelst.

33. Forti Grazzini 1991b, p. 74.

34. Boon 1992, pp. 103–5, pl. 61.

35. Gerszi 1971, nos. 56–60; H. Mielke in Berlin 1975, pp. 120–21.

36. Marillier 1962, p. 7. For the correct identification of this mark, see Calberg and Pauwels 1961.

## Perseus Liberating Andromeda

From a five-piece set of the *Fables of Ovid* (historically called the *Poesia*)

Designs and cartoons here attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst or an artist in his workshop, ca. 1545–50

Woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, Brussels, before 1556

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
356 x 406 cm (11 ft. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. x 13 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  in.)

9–9 $\frac{1}{2}$  warps per cm

Mark of the Pannemaker workshop (bottom of right selvage)

Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de la Granja de San Ildefonso (TA–19/2, 10026391)

PROVENANCE: 1556, purchased on behalf of Philip II in Antwerp; 1559, probably moved to Madrid and used as decoration in the Alcázar after Philip's return to Spain; 1598, listed in the inventory of Philip II; 1659, exhibited in Bidassoa for the meeting of Philip IV and Louis XIV; 1660, displayed on the Isle des Faisans during preparations for the wedding of Louis XIV and Marie-Thérèse; 1664, listed in the inventory of the royal tapestry collection; 1701–3, listed in the inventory of the royal collection after the death of Charles II; 1734, most likely transferred to the Buen Retiro, Madrid, principal court residence; after 1746, set hung in the Buen Retiro during reigns of Philip V and Ferdinand VI; 1788, listed in the inventory of the royal collection after the death of Charles III; 1834, listed in the inventory of Ferdinand VII; 1957, displayed at the Bourbon palace of La Granja in Segovia.

REFERENCES: Wauters 1878, p. 428; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 93–94; Göbel 1923, pp. 293–313; Crick-Kuntziger 1927a, pp. 172–73; Crick-Kuntziger 1929, p. 77; d'Hulst 1960, p. 220; Schneeberg-Perelman 1982, p. 213; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 134–39 (with bibliog.); Horn 1989, p. 46; Dacos 1996b, p. 34; Buchanan 1999, pp. 137–39, 148; Delmarcel 1999b, pp. 155, 158, 169, 174.

CONDITION: Good.

This depiction of the rescue of Andromeda by Perseus is the second panel in a five-piece set now known as the *Fables of Ovid* (historically known as the *Poesia*), one of the most graceful tapestry sequences of the sixteenth century. The subjects are drawn from the *Metamorphoses* by the Roman poet Ovid, which tells of the lives of the gods and their amorous, sometimes tragic relationships with mortal men and women. Appearing in several editions from the late fifteenth through the sixteenth century, this classical text inspired artists ranging from

Giorgione and Piero di Cosimo to Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga. In 1550 Titian began a group of lyrical paintings, “le poesie,” for Prince Philip of Spain that took their subjects from Ovid’s poem. In 1556 the *Poesia* tapestries were also acquired for Philip, who, on his accession to the throne that year, began an intense period of collecting both fine art and tapestries. Lavishly executed in wool, silk, silver, and gold, the set was woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker. The designs and cartoons can be attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst or an artist in his workshop and most likely date from about 1545–50. The circumstances of the set’s design and production are not known. As the designs seem to predate Philip’s purchase by some years, it is likely they were prepared for an earlier editio princeps, now lost.

With its elegant figures, the *Poesia* represent the adaptation of Italian, classicizing style in the North, rendered in the medium of tapestry. Like Titian’s paintings, the set celebrates the beauty of the ideal human form.

### Description and Iconography

The present tapestry shows Perseus’s rescue of Andromeda as related in Book 4 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (ll. 663–752) and closely follows the classical text. According to the story, Andromeda, daughter of the Ethiopian king Cepheus, was chained to a rock to be sacrificed to a terrible sea monster. This was a punishment for her mother, Cassiopeia, who had angered Neptune, the god of the sea, by boasting that she and her daughter were more beautiful than the Nereids. However, Andromeda was rescued by Perseus, son of Jupiter and Danae, while he was on his way home after slaying Medusa. As he flew over many lands, wearing his winged sandals, Perseus spied Andromeda: “Bound by the arms to the rough rocks; her hair, / Stirred in a gentle breeze, and her warm tears flowing / Proved her not marble, as he thought, but woman. / She was beautiful, so much so that he almost / Forgot to move his wings. He came down to her.”<sup>1</sup>

At the right Andromeda is portrayed as an elegant, ideal nude, seated on a rock, her arms

tied to a small oak tree. White-capped waves lap around the rock as, at the center, the sea monster approaches. In the foreground is Neptune, with his trident, emerging from the foamy sea. From the upper left Perseus, also depicted as an ideal nude, swoops in, drapery flying. He brandishes an upraised sword and is about to kill the sea monster, which roars threateningly at him. On the shore behind Andromeda is a crowd of spectators, dressed in classical costume, their arms waving in agitation. In the distance is glimpsed a town, set among rolling hills, that is carefully rendered and perhaps based on knowledge of an actual site. It has been suggested that the landscape may represent the Bay of Jaffa in Palestine.<sup>2</sup> At the left the roiling sea extends to the distant horizon.

The *Poesia* set includes five scenes from the *Metamorphoses*. The other pieces depict the Fall of Icarus, the Rape of Ganymede, Apollo and Marsyas, and the Sacrifice of Polyxena. Ovid’s poem had been known throughout the Middle Ages, serving as the basis for several Christian interpretations of the tales. Among these were the anonymous early fourteenth-century *Ovide moralisé* and Christine de Pisan’s *L’epistre d’Othéa* of about 1400, both of which presented the story of Perseus and Andromeda as an allegory of the rescue of the soul. With the advent of Renaissance interest in classical literature, illustrated editions of Ovid’s text appeared in Venice in 1497, 1522, and 1553. The poem influenced artists throughout the sixteenth century and became known as the “painter’s bible,” for the visual possibilities its imaginative stories of change and transformation allowed. In the 1550s, the *Metamorphoses* inspired Titian to create a series of canvases that he called “le poesie” in a 1553 letter to his patron Prince Philip.<sup>3</sup>

Among these visual poems was a depiction of Perseus and Andromeda (Wallace Collection, London), painted between 1554 and 1556. This lyrical image and Titian’s other “poesie” were, according to Vasari, highly prized by Philip for their subtle coloration and the naturalness of the human forms portrayed.<sup>4</sup> The same fascination with the human













Detail of cat. no. 49

figure evident in Titian's canvases is explored in the *Poesia* tapestries. In the present design, for example, the delicate and soft lines of Andromeda's figure are contrasted with the more dynamic and decisive form of Perseus.

The central image is surrounded by a border decorated with "arabescos" or "entrelazo griego" (arabesques or Greek interlace) as this type of design was called in the Spanish inventories.<sup>5</sup> This exotic pattern of elaborately intertwined geometric forms is interrupted in the middle and at the corners of each border by strapwork decorated with fruit and vegetables. Trompe l'oeil sculpted figures on the sides are intended to imitate stuccowork. Orientalizing ornamentation of this type became popular in the Netherlands in the 1540s with publications such as Hieronymus Cock's volume devoted to Moorish tracery compositions, which appeared in Antwerp about the beginning of the decade.<sup>6</sup> Similar borders framed the *Story of Romulus and Remus*, a set of which was acquired by Henry VIII of England before 1547 (a duplicate set,

acquired by Philip of Spain in 1550, survives in the Spanish royal collection and a private collection; see fig. 189), and the *Vertumnus and Pomona* set and the *Conquest of Tunis* set (see fig. 179 and cat. no. 50).<sup>7</sup> At the top of this panel is a cartouche with the inscription *Liberat Andromedam Perseus* (Perseus Liberates Andromeda).

#### Patron

Philip became king of Spain after the abdication of his father, Charles V, in January 1556. As King Philip II he thereupon embarked on an intense period of collecting.<sup>8</sup> Among his numerous tapestry purchases, which included sets of the *Apocalypse* (see cat. no. 51), the *Verduras*, the *Months*, and the *Grotescos*, was the *Poesia* set.<sup>9</sup> Documentation suggests that the *Poesia* was not commissioned by Philip but was instead purchased on behalf of "su Magestad" by Antonio de Guzman, resident of Antwerp, in late 1556. A five-piece set of *Poesia* is listed among a group of fifteen tapestries of "or, argent et soie" consigned to Juan Diaz, tapissier to Philip II.<sup>10</sup> The

supplier, identified as Pieter van der Walle, was a merchant-entrepreneur specializing in the trade of luxury objects and one of the principal providers of tapestries to the Habsburgs and members of other princely courts of Europe. Because the *Poesia* echo the themes of the contemporary paintings created by Titian for Philip, it may be that the tapestries and paintings were intended as parallel expressions in different media.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, they may simply reflect Philip's taste for classicizing works of this type.

#### Artist and Design

The *Poesia* weavings were delivered in 1556, but the designs are close in style to those of several notable tapestry series which date from the mid- to late 1540s. These include the *Vertumnus and Pomona* (see fig. 182), the *Medici Story of the Creation* (see fig. 122) and some of the *Conquest of Tunis* set (see figs. 179, 180). On the basis of similarities between the figures in the *Poesia* set, those in the *Vertumnus and Pomona* series, and those in some of the *Conquest of*

*Tunis* cartoons and tapestries, Crick-Kuntziger attributed the *Poesia* and *Vertumnus and Pomona* designs to Jan Vermeyen, on the assumption that he was responsible for all the figures in the *Tunis* designs. This opinion has been accepted by many subsequent writers.<sup>12</sup> An alternative assignment to Pieter Coecke van Aelst was made by Schneeberg-Perelman, a reattribution that has considerable merit.<sup>13</sup> Stylistic parallels between those series and Coecke's known work of the 1540s and renewed consideration of the role he probably played in the execution of foreground figures in some of the *Conquest of Tunis* cartoons suggest that he, or his workshop, may also have been involved with the design of the *Poesia* tapestries (see above, pp. 391–95). The figures in the *Perseus and Andromeda* tapestry are close to those in Coecke's triptych, of about 1545–50 (fig. 176). Andromeda is reminiscent of the woman in the foreground of the central panel, with her delicate profile and elaborate braided coiffure, while Perseus is comparable to Christ, with his swirling draperies, in the left panel, the *Descent into Limbo*. In addition, the

muscled form of Neptune as he rises from the sea recalls the dynamic, modeled characters in Limbo.

The cartoons for the *Poesia* set have not survived, but the *modello* for the fourth tapestry, the *Sacrifice of Polyxena* is extant (Louvre, Paris, 19.073). Although the *modello* has been attributed to Vermeyen, Horn has questioned this assignment on stylistic grounds.<sup>14</sup> The style of this sheet instead closely parallels that of another drawing for a tapestry design in the Louvre, one that depicts the *Triumph of Mordecai* (fig. 177) which Marlier attributed to Coecke, based on its similarities to the *Descent* triptych.<sup>15</sup>

#### Workshop

Woven with wool, silk, silver, and gold, the *Perseus and Andromeda* tapestry, as well as the other panels in the *Poesia* set, represents the highest quality of Brussels manufacture. The set was produced by Willem de Pannemaker, and all five panels carry the mark of his workshop. The exact circumstances of the design and production of the set are not known. As the

designs seem to predate Philip's purchase by some years, it is likely that they were prepared for an earlier editio princeps, now lost.

CECILIA PAREDES

1. Ovid 1955, p. 103.
2. Schneeberg-Perelman 1982, p. 213.
3. Buchanan 1999, p. 139; see also Wethey 1975, pp. 71–78, 133–35, 169–72, 188–90.
4. "Le quali pitture sono appresso al re Catolico tenute molto care, per la vivacità che ha dato Tiziano alle figure con i colori in farle quasi vive e naturali"; Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 7, p. 452.
5. Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, pp. 89, 94.
6. M.-C. Jordan and F. Constantini-Lachat in A. Gruber 1994, pp. 291–97.
7. Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 73–92; T. Campbell 1998c, pp. 45–46.
8. Buchanan 1999, p. 133.
9. Ibid., pp. 134–40.
10. Ibid., pp. 137–38, 148, doc. vii.
11. Ibid., p. 139.
12. Crick-Kuntziger 1927a, pp. 172–73; d'Hulst 1960, p. 220; Horn 1989, p. 46; Dacos 1996b, p. 34; Buchanan 1999, pp. 137–38.
13. Schneeberg-Perelman 1982, p. 213.
14. Lugt 1968, pp. 61–62, no. 207; Horn 1989, p. 46.
15. Lugt 1968, p. 62, no. 208; Marlier 1966, pp. 86–87.

## 50.

### *The Sack of Tunis*

From a twelve-piece set of the *Conquest of Tunis*  
Design by Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, ca. 1545  
Woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker,  
Brussels, 1549–54  
Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
527 x 835 cm (17 ft. 3¼ in. x 27 ft. 4¼ in.)  
7½–8 warps per cm  
Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid  
(TA-13/10, 10005906)

PROVENANCE: 1548–54, woven for Charles V; July 25, 1554, displayed at the wedding of Philip of Spain and Mary Tudor, Winchester Cathedral; January 1555, displayed at the church of Notre-Dame in Antwerp for a meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece; 1556, exhibited in Brussels in the grande salle of the royal palace

for Ferdinand Gonzaga, governor of Milan; by 1558, in Spain, probably at the Real Alcázar, Madrid; 1612, seen in the Madrid Alcázar at the reception of the duke of Mayenne; 1626, described as part of the decoration of the Alcázar by Cassiano del Pozzo; 1644, displayed for the obsequies of Isabella of Bourbon; 1644, at obsequies of Philip IV; November 1668, seen in the Madrid Alcázar by Cosimo III de' Medici and his friend Filippo Corsini; 1834, listed in the inventory of Ferdinand VII.

REFERENCES: Houdoy 1873; Valencia de Don Juan 1903; Calvert 1914; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919; Calvert 1921; Göbel 1923, pp. 311–12, 392–93; Junquera de Vega 1968; Steppe 1968; Schneeberg-Perelman 1982, pp. 208–9; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 73–92 (with bibliog.); Horn 1989; Herrero Carretero

in New York 1991, pp. 75–81; Buchanan 1992, pp. 382–84; Buchanan 1999, 132–33; Vienna 2000, pp. 93–99.

CONDITION: Good.

In the spring of 1535 Charles V set out to recapture the city of Tunis from the Turks. It was held by Kheir-ed-Din (Barbarossa), a notorious pirate and newly appointed admiral for the Turkish sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, who used North Africa as a base from which to menace ships in the Mediterranean. Charles's crusade, supported by his European allies, had both political and religious ends: to challenge



Turkish expansion (and to further his own) by restoring his vassal, the Tunisian ruler Mulay Hasan, to the throne and to rescue captured Christians. Eleven years later, to commemorate this event, he commissioned the *Conquest of Tunis* a set of twelve enormous tapestries, which was one of the most ambitious and costly ensembles ever produced.

The set is extremely well documented. The designer was Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen who contracted for the cartoons with Mary of Hungary, Charles's sister, in 1546. Though this seems to have been Vermeyen's first tapestry project, he had accompanied Charles on the campaign and recorded it in numerous drawings that, though lost, are evidenced in the many freshly observed compositional details. Vermeyen included his own portrait in the present work: he is the bearded figure at right center sketching in a large album. He produced the cartoons in collaboration with Pieter Coecke van Aelst, an experienced tapestry designer, whose intervention is particularly evident in the foreground figures in some scenes (see pp. 387–89) but not in the present work. The tapestries were woven in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, the leading Brussels weaver, with precise requirements set out in a detailed contract of February 20, 1548. When the sumptuous set was finally completed in 1554, it was sent to England and displayed at Winchester Cathedral at the marriage of Prince Philip of Spain, son of Charles V, and Mary Tudor. There it was greatly admired, and one observer wrote that the tapestries were "so richelie wrought with golde, silver and silke, as none in the worlde maye excell them" and "so excellently wroughte, and sette out all the Emperoures maiesties proceedinges and victories againste the Turkes, as Apelles were not able (if he were alive) to mende any parcell therof with his pensell."<sup>1</sup>

#### *Description and Iconography*

Tenth in the sequence of twelve tapestries, the *Sack of Tunis* depicts the pillage of the city by Charles V's troops on July 21–23, 1535, and is a continuation of the scene presented in the ninth tapestry, the *Fall of Tunis*. The sack continued for three days until Charles put a halt to it on July 23. Two texts—Castilian in the upper border and Latin in the lower—relate the event:

*Despues que la ciudad se comenco a saquear y algunos moros que se defendian en sus casas fueron muertos:*

*toman los soldados a prision y por esclavos toda la gente que de los/enemigos se halla dentro. Que es grand numero: y mucha rropa y algun dinero: que por la priesa de huir los moros no avian podido llevar consigo: ni bien esconder. Hallanse en la/ciudad muchos xp'ianos captivos: y en el alcacar muchos mas. Porque alli avia mandado barbarroxa que se pusiesen en prision todos los esclavos que pudiesen tomar armas con los/que avia puesto traídos de rreino. Passa el numero de xx. mill. personas con muchachos y mugeres de todos naciones. Los quales esta dia son puestos en libertad. Da el emperador su ciudad y mugeres y hijos que stavan en el alcacar al rrei de tunez el qual queda por tributario del emperador: aceptando de buena gana las condiciones que le quiso poner.*

(After the sack of the city had begun and some Turks who defended themselves in their homes had been killed, the soldiers took prisoner and enslaved all those of the enemy left behind, this being a large number, and captured many goods and some money that, in the haste of fleeing, the Moors had not been able to take with them or conceal well. There were many Christian captives in the city and many more in the fortress. Barbarossa had them sent there so that all those slaves who might take arms with those whom he had declared traitors of the realm would be imprisoned. There were more than twenty thousand, including women and children, of all nations. These were set at liberty this day. The emperor gave the city, and wives and children in the fortress, back to the King of Tunis, who remained a vassal of the emperor, accepting with good grace the conditions posed by the emperor.)<sup>2</sup>

OBSIDET IMMISSVS VICOS HOSTEMQVE TRVCIDAT /  
ARMATVM MILES VICTOR TECTISQVE RECEPTIS /  
VITAE HOMINVM PARCIT IVRE VTENS CAETERA  
BELLI / MILLIA VIGINTI PLVS LIBERTATE RECEPTA /  
VICTOREM CAROLVM TER GRATA VOCE SALVTANT. /  
HASAMVM CAESAR QVAMVIS NIL TALE MERENTEM /  
OMNIA POLLICITVM CVM RE NEC IVVERIT VLLA, /  
RESTITVIT MISERVVM SOLIOQVE REPONDIT AVITO  
(The troops sent against the outskirts of the town lay siege to and take them, slaughter the enemy in armor and, taking the houses, spare the inhabitants. They use the rights of conquest. More than twenty thousand captives recover their liberty and thrice salute Charles the Avenger with cries of gratitude. The conqueror reestablishes the unfortunate Hasan on the throne of his ancestors, though he hardly merited this, as he had promised so much and performed nothing.)<sup>3</sup>

The expansive, panoramic composition derives from the format developed by Bernaert

van Orley for the *Battle of Pavia* tapestries (see cat. no. 35). Here, as in van Orley's series, the main action takes place in the foreground of an extensive landscape, with many lesser narrative episodes in the middle and far distance, beneath a wide cityscape that extends across the background. Vignettes depict the aftermath of the conquest as relatively peaceful. Soldiers gather bundles and corral captives and animals. Boats wait to be loaded with booty in the lagoon at the left. At the lower left a soldier forces a reluctant Moorish woman into a boat, which holds other captives including a Turk, while another soldier leans forward to take the large sack she carries. Behind is another boat filled with captives, while in the distance, at the top left, are the infamous galleys captured from Barbarossa.

In the center foreground an elaborately dressed nobleman gives a man money for two women and a child, perhaps compensating a follower of Mulay Hasan, the Tunisian king and Charles's ally, for his Christian slaves. The nobleman has been identified as Charles V himself,<sup>4</sup> but Horn has pointed out that he bears little resemblance to the Spanish king and may instead be Alfonso d'Avalos, marquis of Vasto, who was Charles's principal commander.<sup>5</sup> To the right a man offers a drink to a Moorish woman. Just in front of them, a woman sits huddled on the ground, safe but dejected, her arm around her small child. A curious figure at the far right leads a greyhound and, though in Moorish robes, carries an imperial soldier's harquebus and wears a plumed helmet. He may be a follower of Mulay Hasan paying homage to the troops who had restored the city or perhaps an imperial soldier dressed proudly in plundered robes. While some soldiers watch over their goods and captives, others sell them back to the Moors. This is perhaps the case at the middle left, where a soldier and a Moor hold a large cloth. Behind them is the city's arsenal, with its six vaults, which was taken and held by escaped Christian slaves as Charles's troops approached the city. In the center middle ground soldiers round up animals, goods, and captives. In the center, just in front of the Jamiaz Zaituna al Barram mosque with its tall minaret, a man beats a Moorish woman, one of the few violent incidents depicted. To the left of the arsenal a man is burned at the stake under the supervision of two priests; while the circumstances are unclear, the man may be a religious



**D**espués que la ciudad se començo a quemar y algunos moros que se defendían  
 enemigos se halla dentro. Que es grand numero: y mucha tropa y algunos de la  
 ciudad muchos christianos captivos: y en el alcazar muchos mas. Porque allí está  
 que el agua puesta salidos del remo. Para el numero de christianos personas con mu-  
 chidad y mugeres y hijos que están en el alcazar almen de unes el qual queda por



OBSIDET INMANSVS MOOS HOSTILMQVE TRV  
 ARMATVM NILES VICTOR TEGTISCVT. REC  
 VILLAE HVMINVM PARCIT IVRE VTES CALI  
 MILLA VICINI PLVS LIBERTATE RECEPT



En esta fueron muertos: toman los soldados aprision por cada una toda la gente que de los  
 que por la piedad de bue los amos no uolun podida llevar consigo. niblez escomider. hallanse en la  
 adado barbaçoras que supuieren en prision todas las ratiuas que pudieren tomar amas con los  
 no vnygeres de todas naciones. Los quales estedia son: pueblos en libertad. De el emper adoz su  
 tautado del emperador: aceptando de bura gana lo con diçones quele quiso poner.



IDAT  
 PTIS  
 A BELL

VICTOREM CAROLVM TER GRATA VOCE SALVTANT  
 HASAMVM CAESAR QVAVVIS NRE TALE MERENTEM  
 OMNIA POLLICITVM CVM RE NEG IVVERIT VITA.  
 RESTITVIT MIREVM SOLI QVQZ REPVNIT AVITO





Fig. 196. *The Sack of Tunis* (detail). Cartoon for the tapestry from the *Conquest of Tunis* by Jan Vermeyen, ca. 1548–52. Body color on paper mounted on canvas, 522 x 847.5 cm (dimensions of whole). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

renegade. At the far right is the walled cemetery of Mualia al Idain, and delicate palm trees and shrubbery dot the rolling landscape.

A detailed representation of the city of Tunis with its several gates dominates the background. At the left, behind the arsenal, is the Bab al Bahr (Sea Gate), at the far right the Bab Qartajanna (Carthage Gate), and in the distance at the southern end of the city can be seen the Bab Jazira (Sazira Gate). At the top right soldiers storm the walls, while in the city's center a small group of Turks make a final stand against Charles's troops.

The bearded figure at the middle right, sketching in a large book, is the artist himself. Wearing a stylish blue cloak and feathered hat, Vermeyen is not dressed as he would have been during the campaign but in the up-to-date fashion of about 1546.<sup>6</sup> The man with him has been identified by some as his collaborator Pieter Coecke van Aelst.<sup>7</sup> As there is no evidence that Coecke participated in the campaign, this identification has been rejected by most scholars. Instead, Horn has suggested he is Felipe de

Guevara, who was in the service of Margaret of Austria, Charles's mother, and Mary of Hungary, his sister, and who is known to have gone on the Tunisian campaign. The figure seems to be assisting or advising the artist, a role Guevara might have played as he is known to have written a treatise on painting.<sup>8</sup>

The central image continues the panorama of the ninth tapestry, the *Fall of Tunis*. The borders are decorated with trompe l'oeil moldings and interlocking circles in gold on a red ground along the upper, lower, and left sides. In the top left corner is Charles V's coat of arms and imperial double eagle; at the lower left is a device with a wreath of flowers surrounding the Burgundian cross and the fire steel of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The left border features an emblem with the columns of Hercules and Charles's motto in French, *Plus Oultre*. The right border is missing.

#### Patron

Charles V commissioned the *Conquest of Tunis* series in 1546 in honor of his recapture of Tunis

in July 1535. The set glorified Charles's role as a military leader. His capture of Tunis, the modern incarnation of ancient Carthage, linked him symbolically to the great Roman general Scipio Africanus. More important, it reinforced Charles's role in promoting a universal *pax christiana* as he conquered the infidel, following the mission set out by his grandparents Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. As noted above, the choice of subjects and the inscription tend to play down the more graphic details of the carnage and plunder that followed the capture of the city.

Charles's plans for the location of these tapestries are unknown. They were eventually hung together in the Madrid Alcázar, though the set may have been intended, as Horn proposes, for the palace at Toledo, Charles's royal city. A room with similar dimensions to the one at the Madrid palace was being renovated at the time the tapestries were being produced, and that space may have been where they were first presented.<sup>9</sup> With Charles's abdication in 1556, two years after the *Conquest of Tunis* was completed, his son, now Philip II, inherited the set.

#### Artist and Design

The designer of the *Conquest of Tunis* set was Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, who contracted with Mary of Hungary on June 15, 1546, to create the cartoons. This is Vermeyen's first known tapestry project, but the artist had firsthand knowledge of the Tunisian campaign, which may have prompted the commission: he had joined Charles's expedition in April 1535 and recorded various aspects of the conquest in numerous now-lost drawings. Vermeyen apparently first prepared a set of presentation drawings (also lost) for the approval of Charles V (or Mary of Hungary), as specified in his contract. These drawings, once approved, may have served as *modelli* for the cartoons.<sup>10</sup> Vermeyen himself prepared full-scale cartoons.<sup>11</sup> Ten of Vermeyen's original twelve cartoons survive (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Vermeyen experienced considerable difficulty in completing the cartoons, and there is strong documentary and stylistic evidence that he was assisted on some of the cartoons by Pieter Coecke van Aelst (see pp. 385–91), but not that for the *Sack of Tunis* (fig. 196).

Only one preparatory drawing for the cartoons has been identified, a pen-and-ink sketch





Detail of cat. no. 50

(Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) probably intended for the present tapestry. It depicts a Tunisian man and woman who have been robbed and massacred and a woman being assaulted by soldiers.<sup>12</sup> These violent scenes may have been rejected as inappropriate to the benevolent image Charles wished to project.

#### *Place of Manufacture*

The *Conquest of Tunis* tapestries were woven in Brussels in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker. A detailed contract between Pannemaker and Mary of Hungary was signed on February 20, 1548, binding him to use only

specific materials such as Granada silk, fine wool, and worsted thread from Lyon. The emperor himself was to supply the gold and silver.<sup>13</sup> The contract further specified that the tapestries were to be at least as rich in silver and gold threads as the earlier *Vertumnus and Pomona* set (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid), also woven by Pannemaker, and would therefore be work of the very highest quality.<sup>14</sup>

Numerous documents reveal a wealth of information about the production process. For example, silk threads, provided by Mary's agent Simon de Parenty, were delivered in sixty-three different colors. There were seven kinds of gold

thread and three of silver. The cost of weaving and materials, plus the cartoons totaled approximately 26,000 pounds, the equivalent today of many millions of dollars.<sup>15</sup>

While no specific date was set for completion of the work, Pannemaker was required to work rapidly and the contract specified he was to have seven weavers working from dawn until dusk on each tapestry as soon as the cartoons were available to him. If any tapestries were delivered to Mary late, Pannemaker would be fined 100 Flemish pounds, and if a tapestry had to be redone, a fine of 800 pounds was set. If he fulfilled the contract satisfactorily, Pannemaker

was guaranteed a life pension of 100 pounds per year. Pannemaker's fee was 12 pounds per square ell, for a total of 15,000 pounds for the set, including an advance of 6,637 pounds for silk threads. The weaver's payment was more than four times that of the designer Vermeyen, who received about 1,900 pounds.<sup>16</sup>

Weaving did not begin on the set until May 1549, when Pannemaker finally received his materials and the first of the cartoons. As each tapestry was completed, it was passed to the master judges of the Brussels guild of tapestry weaving for approval. The *Sack of Tunis* was identified in a document of January 24, 1553, as "le sacq," along with the ninth tapestry which continued the panoramic scene and depicts the fall of Tunis.<sup>17</sup> A certificate from the Brussels guild documents that Pannemaker had completed the series by April 21, 1554. Charles and Mary were so

pleased with the final result that Pannemaker's annual pension was doubled to 200 pounds.

Despite contractual restrictions and obligations, the freedom allowed the weaver in interpreting the design may be gleaned by comparing the cartoons with the tapestries. Horn notes that the colors of the tapestries, in fact, are often brighter than those of the cartoons and some elements in the tapestry composition are more detailed and occasionally completely different from the cartoon. It seems therefore that the master weavers in Pannemaker's workshop were given some latitude to select colors that would best articulate the design.<sup>18</sup>

Subsequently Pannemaker wove two more sets of the *Conquest of Tunis*, one for Mary of Hungary, completed by 1558, and one for the duke of Alba, completed by 1560.<sup>19</sup>

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1. Buchanan 1999, p. 133.
2. Transcription and translation from Horn 1989, pp. 213, 247, n. 266.
3. Transcription and translation from *ibid.*, pp. 212, 247, n. 264.
4. Junquera de Vega 1968, p. 53; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, p. 90.
5. Horn 1989, p. 214.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, p. 75.
8. Horn 1989, p. 214.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
13. Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, p. 75.
14. Horn 1989, p. 125.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–26.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 402, doc. 54.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 136.



## Saint Michael Overcoming Satan

From an eight-piece set of the *Apocalypse*  
Woven in the workshop of Willem Dermoyen,  
Brussels, ca. 1553–56  
Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
525 x 850 cm (17 ft. 2¼ in. x 27 ft. 10¼ in.)  
7–8 warp threads per cm  
Brussels mark (bottom of left side selvage); Dermoyen  
workshop mark (bottom of right side selvage)  
Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de la Granja de  
San Ildefonso (TA-II/5, 10026366)

PROVENANCE: August 1556, the eight tapestries purchased from Willem de Pannemaker; 1559, six of the eight tapestries lost in a storm at Laredo; 1560, the two saved pieces returned to Brussels, and six replacements woven by Willem de Pannemaker; 1561, the tapestries taken to Madrid by Pannemaker; 1571–98, two tapestries from the set transferred to the Escorial palace; 1576, four pieces displayed in the refectory of the Monastery of Guadalupe for the meeting of Philip II with Sebastian, king of Portugal; 1621, the set recorded in the inventory of Philip III; 1666, recorded in the inventory of Philip IV; 1701–3, recorded in the inventory of Charles II; 1788, recorded in the inventory of Charles III; 1834, recorded in inventory of Ferdinand VII.

REFERENCES: Wauters 1878, pp. 58–60, 83–85; Pinchart 1878–85, pp. 118, 120; Guiffrey 1886, pp. 180, 192; Beer 1891, p. cv; Valencia de Don Juan 1903, pp. 65–67; Guiffrey 1911, p. 140; Tormo Monzó and Sánchez Cantón 1919, pp. 63–68; Göbel 1923, pp. 156–58, 313, 417, 441; Hunter 1925, p. 135; W. G. Thomson 1930, pp. 197, 201, 203; Crick-Kuntziger 1943, pp. 84–86; Crick-Kuntziger 1956a; d'Hulst 1960, pp. 157–70; Heinz 1963, pp. 199–200; Steppe 1968, pp. 734–48; Steppe 1981c; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 54–62 (with bibliog.); Herrero Carretero in New York 1991, pp. 40–53; Buchanan 1999, pp. 134–37, 146; Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 101, 105; Delmarcel 1999b.

*Saint Michael Overcoming Satan* is the fifth tapestry in an eight-piece set of the *Apocalypse*, one of the most impressive tapestry ensembles acquired by King Philip II of Spain. In size and importance it rivals the *Honors* (see cat. no. 17) that belonged to his father, Emperor Charles V. Philip commissioned the *Apocalypse* set in 1556, when he was in the Netherlands. It takes its subject from the biblical Book of Revelation, also known as the *Apocalypse*, traditionally thought to have been written by the apostle John while he was on the island of Patmos. The book describes in prophetic terms the great conflict at the end of time between Christ and

Antichrist, ending in the defeat of Satan and the establishment of a new earthly Jerusalem, where the righteous will be received after the Last Judgment.

Upon its completion Philip brought the set back to Spain, but the ship sank on September 8, 1559, while it was still anchored off the Spanish coast, and six of the tapestries from the set were lost. Philip ordered replacements from the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, who seems to have played a part in the initial weaving of the set. In 1561 Pannemaker delivered the new pieces together with the two saved tapestries. *Saint Michael Overcoming the Dragon*, which bears the mark of the Dermoyen workshop, is apparently one of the original two that survived.

### Description and Iconography

*Saint Michael Overcoming Satan* depicts several episodes from chapters 12, 13, and 14 of the Book of Revelation, arranged chronologically from left to right and closely following the biblical text. At left is the war in heaven. The archangel Michael attacks the seven-headed dragon (Satan) and casts him from heaven: “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought . . . And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (12:7–9). Satan’s angels are depicted at the lower left as a multitude of gruesome creatures. In the bottom center of the composition, the Apocalyptic Woman is given “two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness . . . from the face of the serpent” (12:14). She was identified by early commentators as the Virgin or Ecclesia. Above and to the left she is pursued by the seven-headed dragon, which vomits forth a river; but the earth swallows it up, saving her (12:15–16).

In the center background, the beast with seven heads (Blasphemia) emerges from the sea and is given power by the dragon, with his scepter: “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having

seven heads and ten horns, . . . and upon his heads the name of blasphemy . . . and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (13:1–2). The crowd worships the beast and asks, as the inscription above reads, QVIS SIMILIS BESTIE ET QVIS POTERIT PVGNARE CVN EA (Who is like unto the beast and who is able to make war with him?) (13:4). At the lower right, the beast risen from the sea, battles an army whose men retreat in horror. Above them, people kneel before the two-horned monster, which emerges from the earth, bringing fire down from the heavens (13:11–13). Having been ordered by the monster to make an image of the dragon (13:14), the people can be seen adoring the statue they have made, which stands on a column.

Above this group, and in opposition to it, the elect adore the Lamb on Mount Sion: “And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (14:1). Finally, at top center, the enthroned Christ appears with the twenty-four elders and the four beasts of the Evangelists. Thus, the overall composition sets the war in the heavens on the left against the Abominations (the false idols) on the opposite side, with the Apocalyptic Woman and Christ in the heavens dominating the center field.

The exact meaning of the book of Revelation, with its complex action and visionary symbolism, is not clear. Scholars now believe that the text dates from the end of the reign of the emperor Domitian about A.D. 96, a period of religious persecution of both Jews and Christians—circumstances that may play a part in its intended meaning. From the early Christian period onward, the *Apocalypse* was frequently illustrated in painting, sculpture, book illumination, and stained glass, although it was less common in tapestry. King Philip’s *Apocalypse* is one of only two surviving tapestry sets on the subject, both of vast dimensions. The other *Apocalypse* tapestries (see figs. 8, 15; pp. 15, 30, 44) are from the Gothic period. Made up of six enormous tapestries each measuring about 6 by 23 meters, the set was woven for Louis I



of Anjou between 1373 and 1380 in a commission mediated by the Paris tapestry dealer Nicolas Bataille.

#### *Patron, Date, and Workshop*

The Brussels *Apocalypse* was one of several major tapestry sets purchased by Philip of Spain when he was in the Netherlands (August 1555 to 1559).<sup>1</sup> In August 1556, he agreed to pay 7,264 *escudos* to Manuel de Paredes of Antwerp for 796 ells of tapestry in gold and silk. The unnamed tapestries were to be made by the weaver Willem de Pannemaker. Another document of 1556 details the payment to Pannemaker: the tapestries are priced at 9 *escudos*, or 40 *placas*, an ell, and final payment is required by August 1557.<sup>2</sup> Although the subject of the tapestry is not named, its dimension of 796 ells and cost of 7,264 *escudos* correspond exactly to those given for the eight tapestries of the *Apocalypse* in another, undated, account, first published by Beer in 1891.<sup>3</sup> In this document the tapestry maker is not named; the payment of 7,264 *escudos* is made to Diric de Molenare and Gaspar van Utreque, neither of whom appears in the 1556 document.

The eight *Apocalypse* tapestries were among the valuable items that accompanied Philip II on his return from the Netherlands to Spain in 1559. On September 9, one day after the royal party arrived at the port of Laredo, there was a great storm, and a number of the still-unloaded ships sank in the harbor. The losses included tapestries, as is apparent from a letter written by the king on March 6 to Admiral Juan Martínez de Recaldo, informing him that certain valuable items from the royal bedchamber in the care of his tapissier Juan Diaz had been lost. Two chests were saved; and the king ordered Recaldo to return the unnamed items contained in them from Santander to Laredo so that they could be shipped to the Netherlands via England. An additional note mentioned two chests filled with tapestries, wrapped in white cloth and tied with ropes.<sup>4</sup>

The tapestries were returned to the Netherlands, probably in order to be restored and to serve as aids in the weaving of replacements for the lost works. This is confirmed by correspondence between the king and Cardinal Granvelle, his adviser in the Netherlands, in which the making of the replacement tapestries is mentioned, among other matters. Philip













wrote to Granvelle on March 11, 1561, that two tapestry sets, one of which he named as the *Apocalypse*, had been lost in a storm on their way to Spain.<sup>5</sup> He asked Granvelle to oversee the weaving of the *Apocalypse* tapestries by Willem de Pannemaker, whom he had instructed to replace the lost works. In particular, Granvelle was to check the inscriptions on the tapestries, since the text was not in the cartoons. He was also to arrange for transportation of the tapestries by land, to avoid another loss. The other, unnamed tapestry set was a twelve-piece *Story of Noah*, also woven by Pannemaker, of which three tapestries remain today (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, ser. 37). We know this from the 1666 inventory of the tapestry collection of King Philip IV, in which two tapestries from the *Apocalypse* and two from the *Story of Noah* are described as “los ahogados” (the drowned).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, in Philip II’s 1598 inventory, six of the eight *Apocalypse* pieces are valued at 20 ducats and two at 10 ducats, and the twelve-piece *Story of Noah* has ten tapestries valued at 20 ducats and the remaining two at 10 ducats. It appears, therefore, that two tapestries were saved from each set, and replacements were made for all those lost at double the cost.<sup>7</sup>

Six of the eight *Apocalypse* tapestries carry the weaver’s mark of Willem de Pannemaker; the weaver’s mark on the other two was formerly identified as that of Jan Ghioteels’s but now is recognized as that of the Dermoyen workshop.<sup>8</sup> It can thus be concluded that the pieces with the Dermoyen mark are the rescued tapestries. The progress of the weaving of the replacements can be followed from Granvelle’s letters of 1561 to Philip II. On April 11, Granvelle informed the king that three wagons were being made in Mechelen to transport the tapestries and that within two weeks the inscriptions would be in place.<sup>9</sup> All eight tapestries were then transported by wagon to Spain, accompanied by Pannemaker himself, whose account of the expenses he incurred, totaling 60,000 maravedis, has survived.<sup>10</sup> The journey began on August 26, 1561, and was concluded in Madrid on October 22. It seems, however, that the tapestries did not please the king. In a letter to Philip of December 15, 1561, Granvelle regrets the king’s disappointment with the tapestries; he offers the excuse that they had already been finished and lacked only their inscriptions when he became involved.<sup>11</sup>

Detail of cat. no. 51



Detail of cat. no. 51

It is clear from the documents cited that Pannemaker participated in the weaving of both the original set and the replacement pieces. The first set probably was woven in collaboration with the Dermoyen workshop, an understandable procedure given the great size of the tapestries. This type of arrangement certainly occurred; a number of tapestry sets have more

than one weaver’s mark. To meet the material and labor costs for such large tapestries, the financial assistance of wealthy entrepreneurs was often required. It seems likely that Diric de Molenare, Gaspar van Utreque, and Manuel de Paredes, whose names are mentioned in some of the documents, were not weavers but entrepreneurs who underwrote the costs of production.

### Designer

Although it is now documented that the weaving of the first *Apocalypse* set took place in the mid-1550s, the design of the tapestries has an archaic character. One reason is that many of its elements are based on a series of woodcuts of the Apocalypse by Albrecht Dürer first published in 1498.<sup>12</sup> The figures of Michael as he overcomes Satan and of the two flanking angels closely follow those in Dürer's woodcut of the same subject, but in reverse, while the third angel, dressed in white, derives from Dürer's woodcut the *Four Avenging Angels*. A group of falling rebel angels was added in the tapestry composition, and Dürer's figure types were refined and are now more richly dressed. Saint Michael's lance was transformed into an elaborate golden crucifix. The Apocalyptic Woman in the foreground is also partly based on Dürer's woodcut, particularly in the drawing of the wings, but now she is kneeling. To the right the beast with two horns takes its pose and appearance from Dürer's woodcut, in reverse; the adoring crowd of worshipers was somewhat modified and now includes women. The fallen army vanquished by the dragon at the bottom right, its figures forced into the corner of the picture space, recalls similar compositional devices employed in Dürer's *Four Avenging Angels* and *Four Horsemen* woodcuts.

Although the derivation of these motifs from the Dürer woodcuts is readily apparent, the *Apocalypse* tapestries nonetheless show marked stylistic differences, the strong narrative drive and graphic energy of the woodcuts having been replaced by compositions of a much calmer mood in which naturalistic detail is greatly elaborated. With considerable skill the designer adapted Dürer's relatively small images to a presentation of monumental dimensions. In response to the needs of this larger format, a number of episodes in the biblical text not treated by Dürer were included in the tapestry compositions. Much of what appears in the first, fourth, seventh, and eighth tapestries was invented by the designer, and everything in tapestry six (which depicts the Angel preaching the Fear of God, the Angel announcing the Fall of Babylon, the grapes being placed in the wine press of God's wrath, and the Four Angels pouring their scourges).

The designer of the *Apocalypse* tapestries is not named in any documentary source. Friedländer was the first art historian to ascribe

their design to Bernaert van Orley, and this attribution subsequently found favor with many tapestry historians.<sup>13</sup> The designs do indeed display many stylistic links with van Orley's oeuvre. In size and composition the *Apocalypse* set is strongly reminiscent of the *Honors* series (see cat. no. 17). Both have a wide format with the scenes arranged in three main groups across the surface. This correspondence is especially apparent in the first *Apocalypse* tapestry, *Saint John on Patmos*, where a central building with deep space on either side echoes a main compositional principle of the *Honors*. A number of individual figures in the two sets are also closely related. Compare, for example, the position and pose of the fallen warrior at the bottom right in the present work with Nero in *Infamia*, the ninth tapestry of the *Honors* (fig. 130); or the angel and the Apocalyptic Woman with the group of Isaac and Rebecca in *Justitia*, the seventh tapestry of the *Honors*. The Apocalyptic Woman also resembles the kneeling Virgin in van Orley's *Nobilitas* (cat. no. 17).

The *Apocalypse* set shows close stylistic affinities as well to the *Foundation of Rome* set from the Habsburg collection (see fig. 143), which is generally attributed to van Orley and probably dates from the mid-1530s. For example, the Roman soldier standing in the left foreground of that set's *Rape of the Sabines* and the *Presentation of Hersilia to Romulus* is echoed in costume, posture, and profile by the standing soldier in the left foreground of the *Angel Slaying the Dragon* tapestry, while the folds of drapery in Hersilia's costume are not unlike those of the flowing mantle worn by the Apocalyptic Woman in *Saint Michael Overcoming Satan*. The armor of the Roman soldiers in the *Rape of the Sabines* tapestry, elaborately embossed with foliage, can be compared with that worn by the fallen army at lower right in the present work. And the richly detailed, craggy landscapes and tufted trees in the backgrounds of the *Apocalypse* tapestries echo the vistas in the *Foundation of Rome* series.<sup>14</sup>

Van Orley entertained Dürer when the German artist visited Brussels in 1520, and the influence of Dürer's woodcuts and engravings is readily evident in his work of the following years, as is demonstrated by the Passion scenes he designed between 1520 and 1525 (figs. 131–34 and cat. nos. 30–33). It is thus entirely plausible that van Orley designed an

*Apocalypse* series based in part on the memorable images in his friend's renowned designs. Nonetheless, identification of the date when Philip II acquired the first documented weaving of the *Apocalypse*—1556—places in question the traditional attribution to van Orley, who died in 1541, some fifteen years earlier. The problem is compounded by the absence of any surviving preparatory drawings for the series and the lack of any evidence that there was an earlier weaving of the design. Were the designs conceived by van Orley before his death but only aggrandized into cartoons by Michiel Coxie or another, unidentified artist at a later date? Further investigation of this matter is required. The stimulus for an eventual realization of the cartoons may well have been Philip's interest in the work of an earlier generation of Northern masters. While Philip was in the Netherlands he engaged Coxie to copy the *Ghent Altarpiece* by Jan and Hubert van Eyck, and he later acquired Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross* (Prado, Madrid) and *Crucifixion* (Royal Monastery, San Lorenzo de El Escorial), both of which went to the Escorial in 1574. They were joined there, sometime between 1571 and 1598, by two tapestries from the *Apocalypse*.<sup>15</sup> It is to be hoped that future archival discoveries, in the Spanish royal archives in Simancas or elsewhere, will throw further light on these still shadowy questions.

IAIN BUCHANAN

1. For the history of the series, see Steppe 1968, pp. 734–48, and Buchanan 1999, pp. 134–37.
2. The two 1556 documents are published in Buchanan 1999, app. I, and app. II, p. 146.
3. Beer 1891, p. cv; the document is reproduced in Steppe 1968, p. 735.
4. Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Libro 73.
5. For the letter, see Piquard 1950, p. 114.
6. See Steppe 1968, p. 739.
7. For the 1598 inventory, see Delmarcel 1999b.
8. See Delmarcel in Balis et al. 1993, pp. 41–43.
9. Piquard 1950, p. 115.
10. For the payment, see Valencia de Don Juan 1903, p. 66; for the journey, see Steppe 1981c.
11. Piquard 1950, p. 115.
12. E. Panofsky 1943, vol. 2, nos. 280–95.
13. See Steppe 1968, p. 734, n. 64, for bibliography.
14. Both sets are fully illustrated in Valencia de Don Juan 1903, pls. 41–46, 82–89; Junquera de Vega and Herrero Carretero 1986, pp. 54–62, 93–99.
15. See Zarco Cuevas 1930, pp. 119–22.



## The Flood

From a nine-piece set of the *Story of Noah*

Design attributed to Michiel Coxcie, ca. 1545–50

Border design attributed to an unknown Netherlandish artist in the circle of Cornelis Floris and Cornelis Bos

Woven in Brussels, ca. 1550

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread

477 x 835 cm (15 ft. 7½ in. x 27 ft. 4¼ in.)

7–8 warps per cm

Brussels city mark (left end of lower selvage)

Zamek Królewski na Wawelu — Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki, Kraków (10)

**PROVENANCE:** Before 1553, acquired by Sigismund II Augustus for Wawel Royal Castle, Kraków; July 31, 1553, displayed at the marriage of Sigismund Augustus to Catherine Habsburg; 1572, bequeathed to the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania; used by Stephen Báthory during his reign (1575–86); 1582, observed by papal nuncio Alberto Bolognetti at the Ujazdów castle of the dowager queen Anne Jagiellon; 1583, returned to the commonwealth; May 31, 1592, displayed at the celebration of the marriage of Sigismund III Vasa to Anna Habsburg and the queen's coronation; 1633, recorded in the Wawel treasury; September 1637, hung in the Collegiate Church of Saint John on the occasion of the marriage of Władysław IV Vasa to Cecilia Renata and the queen's coronation; 1643, listed in the inventory of property at Wawel Castle as "The Story of the Flood, with gold, 5 pieces"; 1648, inherited by John II Casimir Vasa; ca. 1668, removed from the crown treasury by John Casimir after his abdication and pawned to a Franciszek Gratta in Gdańsk; 1696, recorded in an inventory of goods at Wilanów Palace; 1724, returned to Warsaw and the commonwealth; June 22, 1724, adorned an altar in the marketplace in honor of the Feast of Corpus Christi; moved to the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites in Warsaw for safekeeping; 1764, hung at Warsaw Castle during the coronation of Stanisław II Augustus Poniatowski; 1768, returned to the monastery; 1785, moved to the Palace of the Commonwealth in Warsaw; 1795, confiscated by Catherine the Great of Russia; stored in Saint Petersburg's Tauride Palace; ca. 1860, set divided to decorate the czar's palaces; 1924, set restored to the Polish state and absorbed into the state art collections; 1939, removed to London via France; 1940, moved to Canada; 1961, returned to Poland and installed in Wawel Castle.

**REFERENCES:** Morelowski 1929; Gębarowicz and Mańkowski 1937; Szablowski 1972a; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, pp. 66–67 (with bibliog.).

**CONDITION:** All colors are faded, especially the light spectrum of wools and silks.

This vivid depiction of the calamitous flood described in the Old Testament book of

Genesis is the fourth tapestry in a set of nine of the *Story of Noah*. Its design is attributed to the Netherlandish artist Michiel Coxcie, whose sojourn in Italy from 1529 to about 1539 acquainted him with works of the Italian Renaissance, particularly those of Michelangelo and Raphael. This influence is readily apparent in the *Noah* series, in the character of the figures, the settings, and the citation of specific motifs. The border design, with its Renaissance-inspired grotesques and rich flora and fauna, is attributed to the circle of Cornelis Floris and Cornelis Bos. The *Noah* set was made in Brussels and bears the BB mark of that city. Though no weavers' marks appear on this piece, other tapestries in the set have the marks of the weavers Pieter van Aelst the younger, Jan van Tieghem, and Willem and Jan de Kempeneer, suggesting a collaboration in the production of this large, elaborate set. The *Story of Noah* was acquired by Sigismund II Augustus, king of Poland and Lithuania, for Wawel, his royal castle at Kraków. While the exact circumstances of the set's production and acquisition are not known, the *Flood* was among the tapestries that were displayed at Wawel in 1553 in honor of the king's marriage to Catherine Habsburg on July 31. On this occasion, the Polish humanist Stanisław Orzechowski described the tapestry as follows: "In the fourth [tapestry] one could see the celestial dikes bursting and the skies let loose as well as a raging storm with violent lightning flashes and thunderbolts; in fear of them the godless generation fell to the ground; here one could also discern the ignominious flight of Cain's progeny, testifying to their guilty conscience; some of them are climbing the trees as the waters rise, others are clinging to the lofty rocks, still others are heading for the high mountains. This tapestry is so full of confusion and so terrifying to the beholder that he himself, seized with fear at such a horrible sight, was afraid of a deluge for himself and thinking of an ark."<sup>1</sup>

### Description and Iconography

This tapestry represents the forty days and forty nights of rain sent by God, as described in

Genesis, to destroy all living creatures except for those sequestered on Noah's ark. An inscription at the top border summarizes the Old Testament text in Latin and identifies its source: AQVIS INVNDANTIBVS O[M]NIA PRERVNT SOLA MEDIIS IN TEMPESTATIBVS SERVATVR ARCA GEN. VII (Everything perishes in the swollen waters, only the ark amidst the storms is saved. Genesis 7). The biblical chapter does not specify many more details, but instead, like the inscription, emphasizes the complete devastation wrought by the waters: "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (Genesis 7:23).

Coxcie visualized this catastrophic event taking place in a vast, panoramic landscape with hills and thickets of trees that reach far into the distance. Within this landscape, he elaborated the overall drama and human suffering of the story through a series of separate vignettes and individualized tragedies. At the center, a man stands alone, his face turned in anguish to the unrelenting heavens—an image of utter hopelessness. Behind him, in the distance, is Noah's ark, which had offered refuge to only a few. Other figures throughout the composition try frantically to save themselves, their families, and their possessions. To the left of the standing figure, a man holds a drowned woman. Behind them, figures struggle to climb into a foundering open boat as a woman with a sword tries to keep them out. A man in the left foreground clings desperately to a broken tree, while to his right, another, with a look of abject horror on his face, holds onto the neck of a drowning horse. Just above him, a woman in a red dress clutching an elaborately decorated casket of valuables is hindered in escaping to higher ground by a woman in the water with a small child, who clings desperately to her leg. A group at the left seeks protection under a cluster of trees. At the lower right, huddling on a few scraps of land above the water, another group of men, women, and children wring their hands and hold their heads in despair;



AQVIS INVARIANTIBUS  
MEDIIS IN TEMPESTA





S UNIA PEREVNT SOLA  
IBVS SERVATVR ARCA











Detail of cat. no. 52

even a dog cringes dejectedly. One woman holds another already drowned. Behind them, figures climb into trees to save themselves. Here and there, the tips of buildings appear just above the swirling waters, suggesting the heights the flood has already reached. Also visible are numerous animals: at the left are a dog and a heron, and in the center foreground, a small mouse and a tiny lizard—the “creeping things” of the biblical text—cower among plant roots. Some of the animals may also have a symbolic significance. The owl that has just alighted on a tree stump may be a symbol of death, while the lion at the center of the composition may have been included as a

prefiguration of man’s savior, Jesus Christ, who was called the “lion of Judah.”<sup>2</sup>

The central image is surrounded by a border of fanciful grotesques featuring a whimsical framework upon which satyrs and putti climb, interspersed with exotic birds and swags of flowers and fruit. At the lower corners, seated in ornate two-wheeled chariots with fantastic harness, are Minerva, at the left, and Neptune, blowing into a conch, at the right.

#### Artist

The *Story of Noah* is attributed to Michiel Coxcie (ca. 1499–1592) on the basis of its stylistic similarities to his paintings and engravings. The

first to make this connection was Morelowski, who noted that the solitary figure at the center of the *Flood* is very close in type to Adam in Coxcie’s painting the *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, in Vienna (fig. 191).<sup>3</sup> Other designs in the series have similar correspondences to Coxcie’s work. For example, the figure of Cain in another tapestry at Wawel, *Abel’s Offering*, was subsequently reused by Coxcie for a print series of the *First Parents*, engraved by Jan Sadeler in 1576.<sup>4</sup>

From 1529 to about 1539, Coxcie worked in Rome, where he became a member of the Guild of Saint Luke in 1534. During this period, he evidently studied the work of Roman artists





Detail of cat. no. 52

with close attention. Returning to the Netherlands at the end of the 1530s, he quickly came to the attention of the Habsburg court, and following the death of Bernaert van Orley in 1541, he was of sufficient renown and stature to take over the design of the windows for the chapel of Saint-Sacrement de Miracle in the cathedral of Saint Gudule. He became a citizen of Brussels

in 1543 and remained there until 1563. Although his activity as a tapestry designer is poorly documented, he evidently played a major part in providing designs and cartoons to the Brussels workshops during these two decades (see above, pp. 394–402). Of the numerous series that are attributed to him, the Genesis series at Wawel (depicting, respectively, the *Story of the First*

*Parents*, the *Story of Noah*, and the *Tower of Babel*) are the finest, and the quality of the designs probably reflects Coxcie's direct involvement in their execution (as opposed to other series in which the weaker execution of the designs suggests that Coxcie only supplied the *modelli*). Within this group, the *Flood* is perhaps the most dramatic and impressive composition.



As Morelowski first noted, Coxcie's debt to depictions of the *Flood* by Michelangelo and Raphael is readily apparent.<sup>5</sup> Although Coxcie's figures are clothed, in contrast to Michelangelo's struggling nudes, their scale and frenzy, along with various narrative details—for example, the desperate occupants of the boat in the distance, including the woman battling to keep others out—are evidently inspired by the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, especially the Flood scene. An even more direct source for many of the figural groupings was the Raphael-school fresco of the *Flood* in the Vatican Loggia (1518). The man holding a drowned woman in the left foreground of the tapestry, and the group huddled under trees on the left, are clearly based on drawings or engravings after that fresco that Coxcie must have taken back to Brussels with him.<sup>6</sup> While Raphael also included an image of a man on a drowning horse in the Loggia fresco, a more direct source for the man and horse in the immediate foreground of the tapestry is to be found at the far right of the fresco the *Victory of Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (fig. 149) executed by Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni, after preliminary designs by Raphael.

The border designs are attributed to the circle of Cornelis Floris (1514–1575), an Antwerp-based architect and sculptor, and his close collaborator Cornelis Bos (1506 or 1510–1564), a printmaker, who popularized grotesque ornament in the North. Their interpretation of Renaissance grotesques, including distinctive additions such as scrollwork, began to appear in pattern books in the 1540s. They are used here for the first time in Netherlandish tapestry weaving on a grand scale.<sup>7</sup>

#### Patron

The *Story of Noah* was acquired by Sigismund II Augustus (1520–1572) for his castle at Wawel, and while no documents detail the commission, the dimensions of the tapestries correspond exactly to those of the castle's rooms, suggesting that they were designed specifically for that purpose.<sup>8</sup> Sigismund Augustus was a cultured ruler, who, with his accession to the throne of Poland and Lithuania in 1548, sought to make his court at Kraków one of the most brilliant in Europe by importing artists and architects, musicians, poets, and scientists. He followed the example of his father, Sigismund I, in ordering

tapestries from Brussels. During his reign he collected about 170 tapestries, including the 136 still extant at Wawel. They include three sets—the *Story of the First Parents*, the *Story of Noah*, and the *Story of the Tower of Babel*—comprising nineteen large, figural tapestries with scenes from the book of Genesis. In addition, there are forty-four verdure with landscapes and animals (see cat. no. 53), as well as tapestries with the arms of Poland and Lithuania; others with the king's initials; over- and below-window tapestries; and covers for cushions and chairs. Though few documents exist related to Sigismund Augustus's tapestry purchases, the first group he ordered arrived at Wawel by 1553, when they were hung for his wedding, and the rest were delivered by May 6, 1564, when he authorized payment to his tapestry agent, Roderick Dermoyen, for three years of salary in arrears (that is, for his salary since 1561).<sup>9</sup> In his will of May 6, 1571, the king bequeathed his extensive collection of tapestries to the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania.

#### Place of Manufacture

Woven in Brussels, the *Flood* bears the BB mark of that city on its lower selvage. No documents related to the production of the *Story of Noah* have been discovered, but every tapestry in the set, except the *Flood*, bears a weaver's mark. Five are marked with the initials PVA, ascribed to Pieter van Aelst the younger, and three include marks attributed to Willem de Kempeneer, Jan de Kempeneer, and Jan van Tieghem, suggesting a collaboration among several weavers on the set's manufacture.<sup>10</sup> All of the pieces in the *Story of Noah* set (except perhaps the eighth, the *Drunkenness of Noah*) were completed and delivered to Wawel Castle by 1553, when they were hung for the celebration of Sigismund II Augustus's marriage and were described by the contemporary writer Stanisław Orzechowski.

A number of reweavings of the *Noah* series were produced during the sixteenth century. A second set, of which three pieces are extant (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid), was woven by Willem de Pannemaker for Philip II of Spain in 1563/64–65. This twelve-piece set, with slightly different dimensions, required that Coxcie's original cartoons be repainted; these were then entrusted, in 1567, to an official in the service of Cardinal Maximilian Morillon, and their use was restricted.<sup>11</sup> Though based on Coxcie's

designs for Sigismund Augustus's tapestries, the new cartoons also contained variations.<sup>12</sup> New borders featuring zoological motifs, including animals, birds, and fish in their various habitats, as well as the coat of arms of the king of Spain, were created. Despite the restriction on the use of the cartoons for Philip's set, Pannemaker produced another ten-piece set from them for Margaret of Parma, Philip II's sister and regent of the Netherlands from 1559 to 1567. Two tapestries with Margaret's coat of arms from this set, which she commissioned in 1567, still exist (Wawel Castle, Kraków; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).<sup>13</sup> A third set from Philip's cartoons was produced in 1583 for Don Fernando of Toledo; three pieces, with no coats of arms, are extant (Palacio della Diputación Provincial, Barcelona).<sup>14</sup> A final set from Philip's cartoons was apparently produced in Brussels by Frans Geubels about 1570–80.<sup>15</sup> Only one of the cartoons associated with Philip's set has survived (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid); it shows the embarkation for Noah's ark and the beginning of the Flood. Though it has been little studied, scholars have attributed it to Coxcie's workshop.<sup>16</sup>

MARIA HENNEL-BERNASIKOWA

1. Translation quoted from Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, p. 66.
2. Misiąg-Bocheńska 1972, p. 117.
3. Morelowski 1929.
4. Misiąg-Bocheńska 1972, pp. 157, 162.
5. Morelowski 1929.
6. Ibid.
7. Piwocka 1972.
8. Szablowski 1972b, p. 60.
9. Misiąg-Bocheńska, p. 179.
10. Szablowski 1972a, pp. 458–60; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, pp. 19–21.
11. Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, pp. 116–17.
12. Ibid., p. 117.
13. Hennel-Bernasikowa in Colorno 1998, no. 9; Hennel-Bernasikowa 2000, no. 5.
14. Forti Grazzini in Colorno 1998, p. 117.
15. Ibid.
16. Crick-Kuntziger 1938, p. 8; Misiąg-Bocheńska 1972, p. 182.

## Dragon Fighting with a Panther

Design by an artist in the circle of Pieter Coecke van Aelst, ca. 1550

Border design by an unknown Netherlandish artist from the circle of Cornelis Floris and Cornelis Bos

Woven in Brussels, ca. 1550–60

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped threads

363 x 337 cm (11 ft. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. x 11 ft. 1 in.)

7–8 warps per cm

Unidentified weaver's mark (vertical selvage at top right)

Zamek Królewski na Wawelu—Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki, Kraków (38)

**PROVENANCE:** ca. 1550–60, acquired by Sigismund II Augustus for Wawel Royal Castle; 1572, bequeathed to the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania; 1578, may have been among tapestries sent to Stockholm to Sigismund Augustus's sister Catherine, queen of Sweden; ca. 1587–91, returned to Poland following Sigismund III Vasa's accession; 1648, defined as property of the commonwealth, though used by John II Casimir Vasa on his accession to the throne; ca. 1668, removed by John Casimir at his abdication and pawned; 1724, returned to Warsaw to the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites; 1764, moved to Warsaw Castle for the coronation of Stanisław II Augustus Poniatowski; 1768, returned to the monastery; 1785, moved to the Palace of the Commonwealth, Warsaw; 1795, confiscated by Catherine the Great and removed to Russia; 1924, restored to the Polish state and entered the state art collections; 1939, moved to London via France; 1940, moved to Canada; 1961, returned to Poland and installed at Wawel Castle.

**REFERENCES:** Gębarowicz and Mańkowski 1937; Szablowski 1972a; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, p. 86, illus., p. 87 (with bibliog.); Quebec 2001, p. 9, no. 9.

**CONDITION:** Moderate with considerable weft loss in the areas woven in brown wool. The colors are all somewhat faded.

In this tapestry a lush wooded landscape provides an evocative setting for a violent confrontation between a dragon and a panther. The scene combines medieval Christian symbolism and the tradition of decorative verdure tapestries with the new fascination for science and nature that developed in the mid-sixteenth century. *Dragon Fighting with a Panther*, woven in Brussels, was one of a large group of forty-four innovative tapestries depicting animals in

naturalistic, wooded landscapes acquired by Sigismund II Augustus, king of Poland and Lithuania, for his royal castle, Wawel, at Kraków. Although no documents related to their production and acquisition have been found, the tapestries are generally dated between 1550 and 1560 on stylistic grounds.

### Description and Iconography

In this tapestry a dark landscape opens up at the right to an idyllic view of a distant glade, a river, and, in the far distance, blue hills dotted with stylized trees. The dragon, presented here as a wolflike creature with webbed wings and feet, bites the throat of the panther, whose coat is made up of curious spotted "feathers" of fur. At the left are three young dragons, huddled together in fear. Above them a second panther moves forward to join the fray.

Behind them, at the center of the composition, is a light-filled, peaceful landscape that is in stark contrast to the dark violence of the foreground. Various animals roam freely in a sunlit glade, where there is no sign of mankind. An exotic unicorn-giraffe and an ordinary goat are discernible, along with another spotted panther. Behind them is a thick forest, and to the left a river meanders quietly into the distance. The composition is closed at the top by a canopy of intertwined branches from the laurel (?), oak, and apple trees of the foreground, which also close it at left and right. The twisted trunks and their tangled roots suggest a Mannerist, almost fantastic style. However, foliage is rendered with botanical accuracy. Some of the wildlife, including the small lizard at lower right crawling into the undergrowth, are also realistically depicted.

The exacting representation of flora and fauna embodied in this design, requiring careful observation of the natural world, reflects the new spirit of the Renaissance and looks forward to the development in the sixteenth century of pure landscape painting. From 1550 to 1560 the science of zoology was shaped by several important publications, including Konrad Gesner's four-volume *Historia animalium*

(Zurich, 1551–58). The texts, which still included some imaginary beasts, offered information based on direct observation, as well as gleaned from ancient scientific texts. Presented in a systematic way, these studies were in sharp contrast to allegorical fables of the earlier bestiaries. In Gesner's books woodcuts illustrating each animal, reptile, bird, or fish and their accompanying entry were presented in alphabetical order. Gesner's publications seem to have served as models for several of Sigismund Augustus's landscape tapestries that featured animals, singly or in pairs, and presented a visual "encyclopedia" of creatures in their natural habitats.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the veneer of scientific observation, the subject matter of this scene is still tempered by the moralizing symbolism of the Middle Ages, particularly that of medieval bestiaries. The basis for these was the *Physiologus*, an anonymous text written in Greek that appeared about A.D. 200–250, in which one "fact" was presented for each of forty real or imaginary animals and was then interpreted as a Christian allegory. According to the *Physiologus*, the panther and the dragon were enemies. The panther, while beloved by other creatures, would drive the dragon into its den, which is suggested by the cowering young at the left of this tapestry. According to the text, the panther "slept for three days and on awakening drew all the other animals around it with its sweet breath, like Christ who on the third day rose from the dead. . . . The dragon is the devil who Christ overcame."<sup>2</sup> This scene, then, is not merely a fight between a panther and a dragon, but the struggle between Christ and the Devil, between good and evil. This conflict is underscored by the striking contrast of dark and light in the composition—the dark, tangled elements of the foreground and the sunny, idyllic background. It may also be echoed in the apples at the upper right and the small red flowers at the lower left, symbolic, perhaps, of the Fall of Man and his redemption through the sacrifice of Christ.

The composition is framed by a trompe l'oeil molding with acanthus leaves and a second











narrow border with a pattern of two ribbons intertwined on a red ground interspersed with flowers. Across the top of the tapestry is a more elaborate border with baskets and garlands of fruit and flowers alternating with figures and animals, including a crocodile, a tortoise, and, at the center, a pair of panthers, repeating the main scene's motifs of flora and fauna.

#### Patron

The verdure tapestries acquired by Sigismund II Augustus for Wawel Castle fall into three groups based on their size and format: large square pieces, including *Dragon Fighting with a Panther*; rectangular pieces with a horizontal format; and rectangular pieces with a vertical format. The fact that they are of different sizes and format suggests that they were planned for specific locations within the castle. The tapestries seem to have been collected between 1550 and 1560, when Sigismund Augustus acquired about 170 Netherlandish tapestries, including the nineteen pieces with scenes from the book of Genesis. By 1553 two sets with the *Story of First Parents* and the *Story of Noah* (see cat. no. 52) had arrived at Wawel Castle and were displayed for the king's wedding. A description of the nuptials published by the Polish human-

ist Stanisław Orzechowski did not mention the verdure tapestries and presumably they had not yet been produced. They were probably delivered by about 1560; recent research indicates that from the early 1560s Sigismund Augustus collected only black-and-white textiles.<sup>3</sup>

#### Artist

The designer of the verdure tapestries is unknown. The compositions of realistic animals in natural surroundings were completely new to the medium. As mentioned above, the artist seems to have been familiar with contemporary zoological studies, including Gesner's woodcut illustrations.<sup>4</sup> A drawing (British Museum, London) which scholars have attributed to the circle of Pieter Coecke van Aelst, depicting a rhinoceros, an elephant, and monkeys in woodland scenery, similar to that depicted in the Wawel tapestries, is closely related to the Wawel verdures. While none of the Wawel tapestries corresponds exactly to the drawing, a now-lost tapestry from Sigismund Augustus's collection was described in a 1735 inventory as depicting a rhinoceros, an elephant, and monkeys in the trees, and it is therefore possible that the drawing is the one extant *modello* for this series.<sup>5</sup>

The borders, with their animals and grotesques, are associated stylistically with the work of Cornelis Floris and Cornelis Bos, who adapted grotesque ornament from Renaissance Italy and popularized it in the North in the mid-sixteenth century. The designer of the borders may have worked in their circle.<sup>6</sup>

#### Place of Manufacture

No documentation has been found related to the production of *Dragon Fighting with a Panther*, and it does not carry a city mark, but we can assume that it was made in Brussels both on the basis of its quality and because other pieces in the group carry the city mark. On the upper selvage, the tapestry bears the mark of a weaver, as yet unidentified. The same mark also appears on another of Sigismund Augustus's tapestries, which represents satyrs supporting the monogram SA.<sup>7</sup>

MARIA HENNEL-BERNASIKOWA

1. Hennel-Bernasikowa 1972, p. 249.

2. Lauchert 1889, p. 19.

3. Hennel-Bernasikowa 1996, pp. 43–44; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, p. 26.

4. Hennel-Bernasikowa 1972, p. 249.

5. Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, p. 17.

6. Piwocka 1972; Hennel-Bernasikowa 1998, p. 18.

7. Szablowski 1972a, p. 464.

## Throne Baldachin

Composed of eight separate tapestry components  
Design by Hans Vredeman de Vries with figures by  
Michiel Coxcie, 1561

Woven in the workshop of Master FNVG, Brussels,  
ca. 1561

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread

Backcloth, 419 x 271 cm (13 ft. 9 in. x 8 ft. 10 1/4 in.); canopy,  
173 x 285 cm (5 ft. 8 1/4 in. x 9 ft. 4 1/4 in.); inner and outer  
valances for canopy: left: 59 x 166 cm (1 ft. 11 1/4 in. x 5 ft.  
5 1/4 in.), 64 x 173 cm (2 ft. 1 1/4 in. x 5 ft. 8 1/4 in.); middle: 58 x  
282 cm (1 ft. 10 1/4 in. x 9 ft. 3 in.), 63 x 285 cm (2 ft. 1/4 in. x  
9 ft. 4 1/4 in.); right: 58 x 167 cm (1 ft. 10 1/4 in. x 5 ft. 5 1/4 in.),  
64 x 181 cm (2 ft. 1 1/4 in. x 5 ft. 11 1/4 in.)

8–9 warps per cm

Brussels mark (three times) and that of Master FNVG  
(twice) on various components including the backcloth,  
where the city mark appears at left end of lower selvage  
and the weaver's mark at the bottom of right selvage  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (T XIV, 1–8)

PROVENANCE: Presumably commissioned by  
Charles III, duke of Lorraine; listed in the 1575–1606  
inventory of Charles's possessions; by descent to the  
last duke of Lorraine, Francis III (subsequently crowned  
emperor as Francis I), who took the baldachin, along  
with other tapestries, to Vienna when he married the  
archduchess Maria Theresa in 1736; from 1765, by  
descent in the imperial collection in Vienna.

REFERENCES: Birk 1883–84, p. 168; Baldass 1920,  
nos. 135–39; d'Hulst 1967, pp. 251–56, 302; Mahl 1968  
(with bibliog.); Vienna 1983, pp. 12–13.

CONDITION: Excellent, with outstanding preservation  
of the colors. The tapestry underwent conservation in  
1966–67.

Baldachins and throne canopies were an integral  
part of the display associated with medieval and  
Renaissance courts. They served to demonstrate  
the focal point of an audience chamber and pro-  
vided a suitable stage for the patron's appear-  
ance in audience, as illustrated in the engraving  
of the abdication of Charles V (fig. 2). Although  
contemporary inventories provide vivid details  
of these sumptuous ensembles, few have sur-  
vived, no doubt because their official function  
became increasingly irrelevant as the protocol  
of court appearances changed during the eigh-  
teenth and nineteenth centuries. This baldachin  
is of unique importance: not only is it a very  
rare example of its type, for the exceptional  
artistic conception that it embodies, but it is  
also in extraordinary condition. Normally kept

in storage in the reserves of the Kunsthistorisches  
Museum, the ensemble has been reconstructed  
on only one previous occasion over the last hun-  
dred years. Thus this exhibition provides a rare  
opportunity to appreciate it in its full splendor.

### Description

The tapestry depicts a trompe l'oeil architectural  
alcove, with an opening in the upper part (on  
the backcloth) beneath a trompe l'oeil cupola  
(on the canopy). The floor of the alcove is deco-  
rated with marble tiles in a geometric pattern.  
The space of the alcove is further defined by the  
dado and the entablature with two Corinthian  
columns. Above the entablature is a portion of  
coffered ceiling. The lower shafts of the columns  
are richly decorated with grotesque ornamenta-  
tion, as are the dado and the flanking walls.  
At the corners of the back wall are pilasters  
capped with Corinthian capitals and decorated  
with grotesques.

The back of the alcove opens into a barrel-  
vaulted arch with a coffered ceiling. A man and  
a woman sit in the foreground, their proximity  
to the edge emphasized by the foot of the left  
figure, which appears to project over it. The  
man holds a scepter and is dressed as a classical  
warrior; his companion, who extends her hand  
toward him, is also dressed in antique robes.

The sitters are identified by the inscriptions in  
two cartouches, in the frieze above the opening  
and in the plinth below it. Above appears SEX  
CVM CHARA HABITAT/MENSES PROSERPINA MATRE  
(Proserpine [Persephone] spends six months  
with her beloved mother); and below, SEX CVM  
DILECTO/CONIVGE DITE MANET (She remains with  
her beloved husband Pluto for six months). The  
inscriptions refer to the myth of the creation of  
the seasons, according to which Pluto, god of  
the underworld, abducted Persephone, daughter  
of Ceres, goddess of the earth. Realizing that  
he had done this with the knowledge of Jupiter,  
Ceres cast the world into winter until her daugh-  
ter was returned. However, Persephone made  
the fateful mistake of eating six pomegranate  
seeds while she was in the underworld, compell-  
ing her to spend six months of each year with  
Pluto (six months in which Ceres continues to  
withdraw her fertile grace from the world). The

consequences of this act are reflected in the  
scenes depicted in the roundels in the spandrels  
above the arch and in the plinth below it, each  
of which is identified with one of the seasons  
by an inscription in a cartouche. In the first,  
VER (Spring), we see Persephone returned to  
her mother, who presents her to Minerva; in  
the second, AESTAS (Summer), we see her play-  
ing with her friends; in the third, AUTVM[NVS]  
(Autumn), she is leaving her mother; and in the  
fourth, HYEMS (Winter), Pluto is lifting her into  
his chariot to take her to the underworld.

Behind the figures is a long arcade beneath a  
barrel-vaulted ceiling decorated with strapwork  
and circular apertures. At the end of this per-  
spective, the scene opens into a square with a  
palazzo on the right side and in the center a  
massive fortress whose inner doorway is barred.  
Flames blaze up from the tower, suggesting that  
the doorway is to the underworld. The mon-  
sters and creatures that appear in the flames  
may be eidola, souls and shades on their way to  
the underworld, as depicted on Greek vases.

Within the alcove, the faces of the various  
parts are all richly decorated with strapwork  
and grotesque motifs, which incorporate a vari-  
ety of cartouches with decorative Greek letters;  
figures, some of which participate in activities  
relating to the seasons of the year; as well as  
plants, birds, and fantastic creatures. In the cen-  
ter of the dado is a strapwork cartouche with  
the head of an unidentified man with distinc-  
tive, individual features. Baldass suggested that  
this may be a self-portrait of Vredeman de Vries  
because it is positioned between the two car-  
touches giving his name in Greek letters.<sup>1</sup> Small  
strapwork cartouches with fragments of a  
Greek inscription giving the name of Vredeman  
de Vries appear on either side of the alcove at  
waist and hip height of the principal figures.

The canopy represents a shallow coffered  
ceiling, decorated with strapwork and grotesques,  
with a three-storied cupola, seen in steep per-  
spective, in the center. The valance sections are  
also decorated with strapwork and grotesques,  
centered at the front by a strapwork cartouche  
framing a male bust.

The whole ensemble is designed to conform  
to one perspectival formula, which requires that





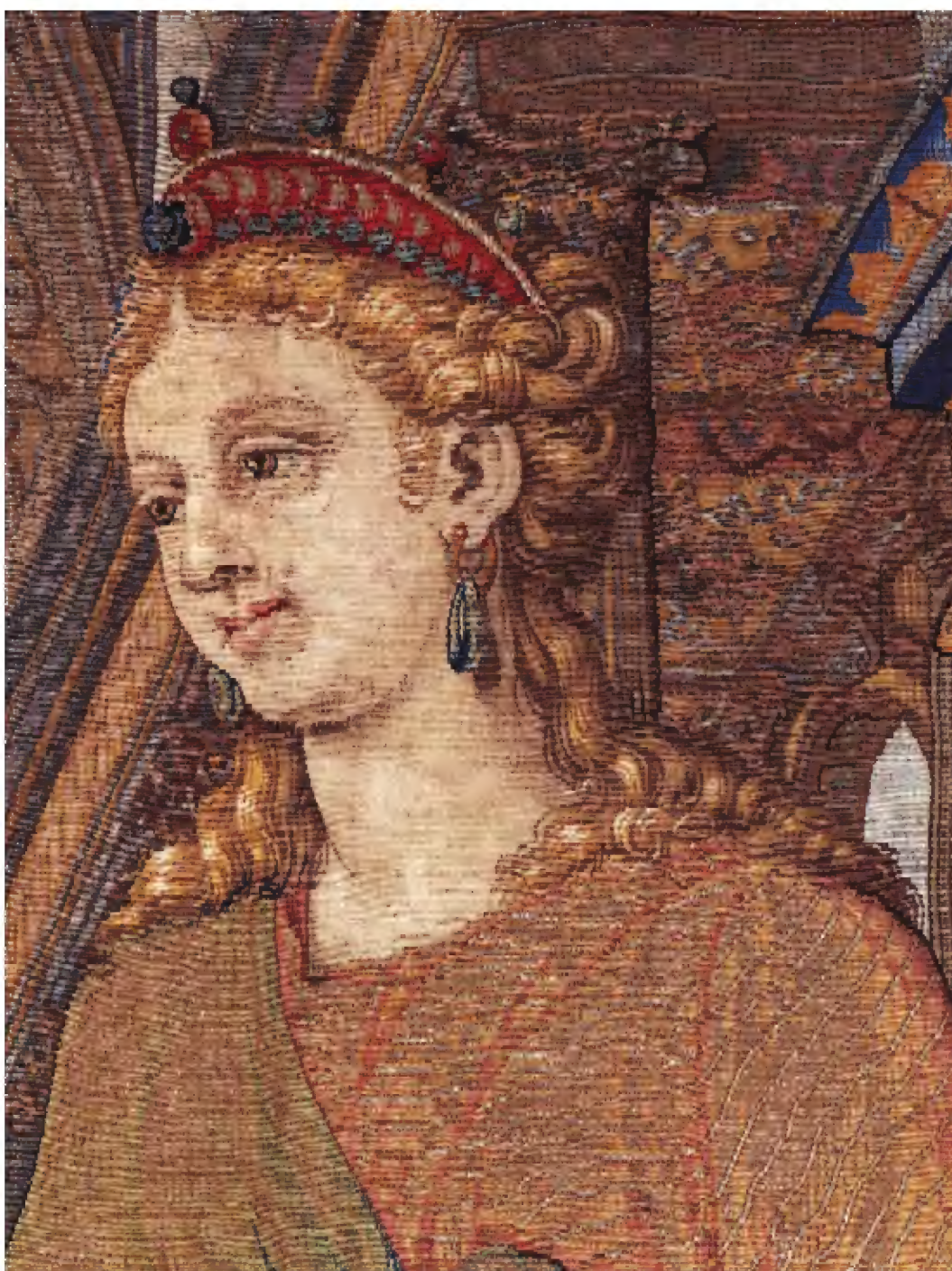




AESTAS

SEX CVM DILECTO  
CONIVGE DITE MANET





Detail of cat. no. 54

the viewer stand about 2.5 meters in front of the baldachin, with the line of sight at the top of the doorway to the fortress. From this viewpoint, the ensemble provides an extraordinarily effective illusion of spatial recession, in which the steeply receding orthogonals draw the eye to the castle in the distance.

#### *Patron and Iconography*

Although Lorraine became an independent duchy under the protection of the Holy Roman

Empire during the early Middle Ages, language and culture linked the region to France.

Charles III, duke of Lorraine (1543–1608), was only a child when he inherited the title in 1545. Henry II of France took this opportunity to invade the territory, remove the child to his court, raise him there, and marry him to his daughter Claude in 1559. Following the accession of Francis II in 1559, Charles returned to Lorraine, where he devoted himself to the administration of his duchy. Charles was an

ardent Catholic and took part in the Wars of Religion in France as a member of the League. His court, based in the capital, Nancy, was noted for its ostentatious festivities and extravagant religious ceremonies, which are impressively conveyed by the series of engravings commemorating Charles's funeral in 1608 where tapestries are much in evidence. Indeed, Charles evidently carried the French appetite for Netherlandish tapestries to Nancy, and he made a number of major purchases during his





Detail of cat. no. 54

reign. The most impressive is a ten-piece set of the *Story of Moses*, acquired between 1559 and 1565 (nine pieces are now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Lavishly woven with gilt-metallic thread, the tapestries have borders identical to those on the *Acts of the Apostles* sets produced for Francis I and Henry VIII and carry

the arms of Charles along with those of his father, mother, and wife.<sup>2</sup> Other high-quality sets in the Austrian state collection probably purchased by Charles include a ten-piece set of the *Story of Abraham*, woven with the arms of Cardinal Charles de Lorraine-Vaudémont and a set known as the *Grotesque Months* woven in

Brussels about 1560.<sup>3</sup> Other notable acquisitions can be identified in the 1575–1606 inventory of Charles's possessions.<sup>4</sup>

No documentation relating to the purchase of the baldachin by Charles is known, but the year 1561 appears upon it. Whether this was the date the cartoon was painted or that in which the tapestry was woven is uncertain. Either way, production during the period 1559/60–1561 or 1561–1562/63 places the conception of the design shortly after the marriage of Charles to Claude in 1559 and coincidental with the period in which Charles and his young bride traveled between Paris and Nancy while improvements were undertaken at the ducal palace. Beginning in 1561 it was rebuilt along the lines of the Louvre.

Although Charles's personal iconography subsequently included allusions to a variety of mythological figures, there is no evidence of his use of Pluto and Persephone in this way. Considering his youth at the date the tapestry must have been commissioned, the inspiration for the theme may have come from the French court. Henry II and Catherine de' Medici both used mythological associations to reinforce their power: Henry was portrayed as Hercules; Catherine, as Juno and, after Henry's death in 1559, as Artemesia, the archetypal devoted widow. A possible interpretation of the marriage imagery in this baldachin could be that Persephone separated from her mother Ceres represents Claude separated from Catherine de' Medici, while Charles is Pluto, who has taken her from her mother—but who loves her. The story with its connotations of fruitfulness and plenty would have been an appropriate marriage theme for the bride "forced" to leave her loving family.

#### *Date and Designer*

Two small cartouches among the grotesques on the lower shafts of the columns bear, respectively, the inscription ANNO and 1561.<sup>5</sup> Two others in the grotesques on the dado contain a Greek inscription, ΦΡΕΕΑΜΑΝ ΦΡΙΕΣΕ (Freedman Friese) in reverse, for Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–ca. 1606), one of the most influential designers of the second half of the sixteenth century. Born in Leeuwarden in Friesland—hence "de Vries"—he studied first in his native town and then in Kampen, before traveling to Mechelen and then Antwerp, where he was one of the artists who worked under Pieter Coecke van



Aelst on the design and execution of the triumphal arches made for the joyous entry of the emperor Charles V and Prince Philip of Spain in 1549. It must have been during this visit that Vredeman de Vries was first introduced to the work of the architects Vitruvius and Sebastiano Serlio as published in Coecke's translations. Furthermore, it was from this date that Vredeman de Vries began to produce sets of engravings of elaborate architectural and ornamental designs that synthesized his classical sources with elements taken from Cornelis Floris and from Jacques Androuet du Cerceau and the Fontainebleau school. Karel van Mander records that during this period Vredeman de Vries specialized in paintings of perspectives, scenery, and frescoes.<sup>6</sup> He returned to Mechelen about 1560 but about 1561 settled in Antwerp. Following the insurrection of the iconoclasts and fearing prosecution as a Reformationist sympathizer, Vredeman de Vries fled with his family to Aachen in 1570. He returned to Antwerp in 1575, and from 1577 to 1585 he was master builder of the city's fortifications. With the occupation of Antwerp by the duke of Parma in 1585, Vredeman de Vries was again forced to flee, and he worked in a succession of different cities before his death in Antwerp in about 1606.<sup>7</sup>

The Vienna baldachin provides an outstanding example of Vredeman de Vries's artistic style and interests, in which carefully observed elements of classical architecture, translated into masterly trompe l'oeil illusion, are combined with a tour de force of playful decorative detail. Vredeman de Vries was famed as a painter of trompe l'oeil frescoes, and the baldachin gives us an idea of what these works (now lost) may have looked like.

While the relationship between Vredeman de Vries's architectural and ornamental designs

is manifest, the figures evidently are not in his hand. Stylistically, they conform to those in works attributed to the Netherlandish Romanist painter Michiel Coxcie, in particular the figures in the Wawel *Noah* and the Vienna *Seven Virtues* tapestry series, and the figures are generally accepted as his. Vredeman de Vries is known to have painted architectural settings for other artists, and this baldachin appears to have been the first of a number of collaborations with Coxcie over the next three decades.<sup>8</sup>

#### Workshop

Attempts to identify the workshop mark have resulted in a great deal of confusion. Recently, Delmarcel (1999) assigned it to Frans Ghieteels (certainly active between 1561 and 1581), a name that was first suggested in 1986, by Hefford, who based her identification on the initials FNG.<sup>9</sup> However, the mark, FNVG, includes a V and seems to have no connection with Frans Ghieteels. The reading of the mark is, in fact, problematic. It appears, repeatedly, both in inverted—mirror image—form (as NFVG), and also upside down, as seen on the *Grotesque Months* tapestries in Vienna and on the *Acts of the Apostles* in Mantua. Göbel did not include FNG or FNVG in his 1923 survey of workshop marks. Instead, he cited an NLE cipher, his interpretation of the upside-down version of the initials, and assigned it to the workshop of Nicolaas Leyniers with a question mark.<sup>10</sup> However, as Leyniers died before 1548 this identification is unacceptable.<sup>11</sup> In 1948 Crick-Kuntziger proposed that the mark may have been that of Leyniers's widow, Catherine van Huldenberghe.<sup>12</sup> In 1962 Calberg suggested that Catherine had taken over the mark of her husband and had attached an E for her son Everard.<sup>13</sup> This view was followed by Schneeberg-Perelman

in 1972 and Bauer in 1983.<sup>14</sup> In 1983 E. Duverger argued that the four letters of the mark were to be read as F [or E] NVG and that they could not be assigned definitely to any known workshop.<sup>15</sup> Mahl, who has made the most comprehensive study of the throne baldachin, assigned the mark in 1968 to Frans Geubels (fl. ca. 1545–85).<sup>16</sup> While the mark of Frans Geubels is somewhat similar to that on the throne baldachin, it is not identical.<sup>17</sup>

At this point, the master of the mark FNVG, whose workshop produced such outstanding tapestries as the *Tobias* set in Vienna, the *Acts of the Apostles* in Madrid, several verdure pieces and grotesques with coats of arms in Kraków, as well as the tapestries of the *Story of Saint Peter and Saint Paul* in the Saint Peter's Abbey in Ghent, can not be definitely identified.

THOMAS CAMPBELL AND ROTRAUD BAUER

1. Vienna 1922, p. 41, no. 68.

2. Mahl 1967.

3. Scheicher 1973; Vienna 1983, pp. 13–15.

4. Molinier 1885.

5. Birk (1883–84, p. 168) mistakenly read the date as 1566, a mistake that has been perpetuated in the subsequent literature, notably Baldass 1920, nos. 135–39, and d'Hulst 1960, p. 252.

6. Van Mander 1604, fols. 265–67.

7. M. Van de Winckel in Grove 1996, vol. 32, pp. 724–27 (with bibliog.)

8. Jacobs 1993, pp. 238–40.

9. Delmarcel 1999a, p. 365; J. Duverger 1973, pp. 72–74; Hefford 1986, p. 86.

10. Göbel 1923, pl. 5.

11. Calberg 1962, p. 106.

12. Crick-Kuntziger 1948, pp. 77–78.

13. Calberg 1962, pp. 105–8.

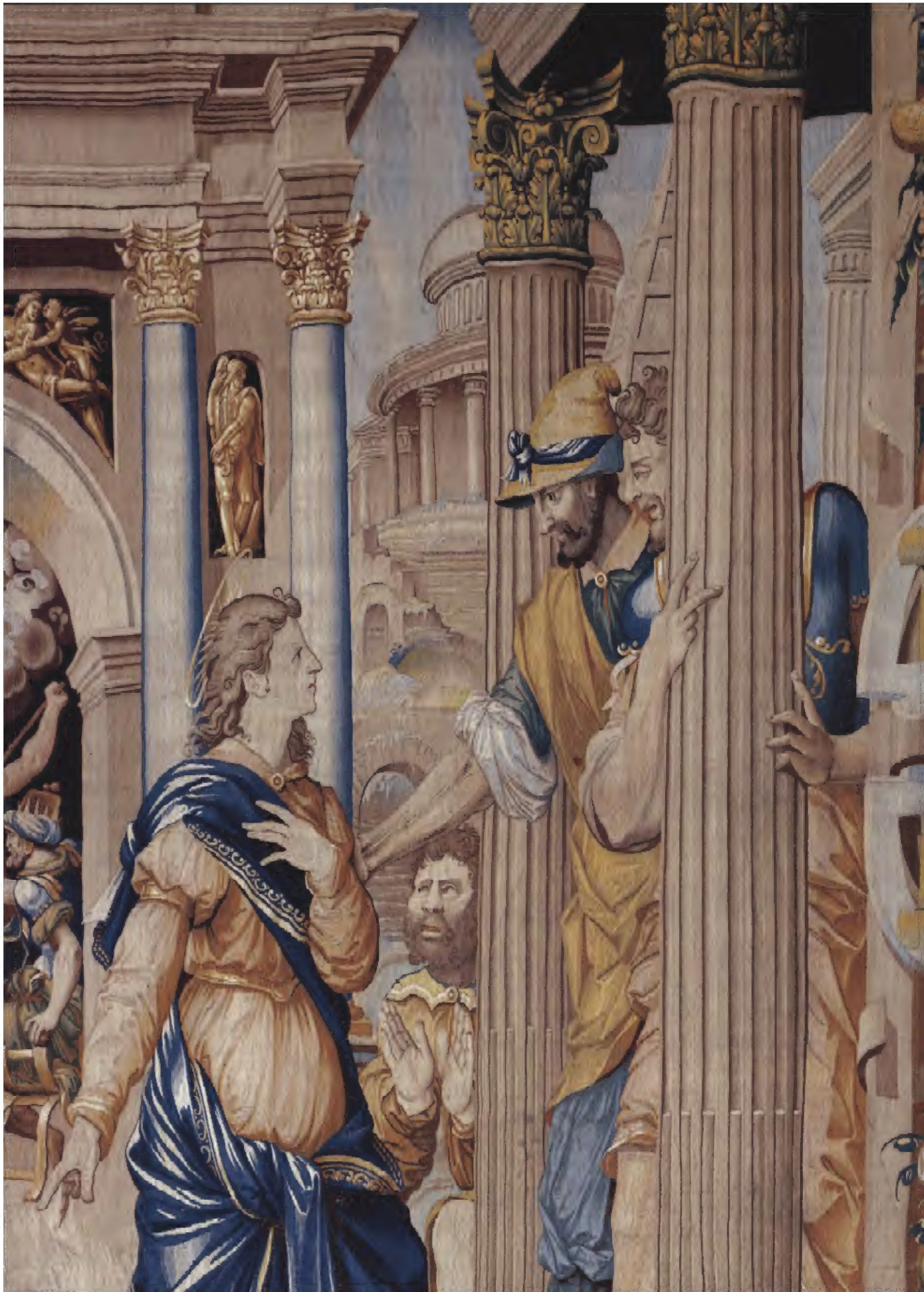
14. Schneeberg-Perelman 1972, pp. 421–25; Vienna 1983, p. 12.

15. E. Duverger 1983, pp. 20–21.

16. Mahl 1968, p. 96.

17. Göbel 1923, pl. 5.







# Tapestry Production in France, 1520-60

The French crown and nobility had been among the leading patrons of the main centers of tapestry production in France from the earliest development of the industry in Paris and Arras at the end of the fourteenth century. By the early sixteenth century high-quality production was centralized in Southern Netherlandish towns, to which they now turned for the best tapestries. It is clear, however, that there were also many native workshops that supplied hangings of lower quality to the rich to supplement foreign imports, and to the lesser nobility and bourgeoisie because it was all they could afford. A detailed history of tapestry making in France during the sixteenth century has yet to be written. One of the main problems is that French tapestries were not required to carry a town or workshop mark until well into the seventeenth century, so that, despite the substantial number of tapestries from French manufactories that survive, it is difficult to distinguish them from contemporary Netherlandish production. Nonetheless, the basis for a detailed analytical survey does exist in the abundant documentary sources of the day, many published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, others brought to light by more recent research.<sup>1</sup>

In the Low Countries a constant demand for products, strict guild regulations, and the capitalization of the industry by rich merchants and merchant-weavers evidently allowed many weavers to enjoy a relatively secure livelihood in one center or another. Contemporary documentation reveals that the circumstances of the French counterparts of the Netherlandish artisans were much less stable. The survival of large numbers of millefleurs tapestries featuring genre, courtly, and religious subjects in France led early and mid-twentieth-century tapestry historians to assume that these panels had been manufactured by itinerant weavers working in the Loire valley.<sup>2</sup> While this theory is not substantiated by documentary evidence and has now been discredited,<sup>3</sup> it presents a picture that is probably closer to the reality of much of the production in France than to that of the main centers in the Low Countries. Although documentation demonstrates that there was a considerable, even enormous demand for tapestries from secular and ecclesiastic patrons in France, the cost and quality of most of their commissions were relatively low. Thus, the circumstances

were not conducive to the development of large, well-established workshops with highly specialized weavers. And while there were many workshops in Paris and the Marche towns of Aubusson and Felletin, and a few establishments in towns such as Tours, Toulouse, Nevers, and Bordeaux, these were more hand-to-mouth operations compared to the ateliers of the principal Netherlandish centers. Records relating to French tapestry making survive in dramatically increasing numbers from 1530 onward. It is unclear whether this increase reflects an equally dramatic growth in the volume of native production from this date, or whether the level of manufacture was consistent throughout, and more documents were preserved accidentally for the period 1530–60. In all likelihood the truth probably lies somewhere between the two extremes.

## TOURS

One of the earliest French towns in which there was significant tapestry making during the early sixteenth century was Tours, which, evidence shows, hosted a small number of weavers from the 1520s.<sup>4</sup> The earliest production traditionally attributed to a workshop of this town is a set of the *Story of Saint Saturnin* that was donated to the church of Saint-Saturnin in 1528, according to the final wishes of Jacques de Beaune de Semblançay, before his execution for embezzlement in 1527. Three pieces survive and one was known until recent times (two are at the Angers château [see fig. 198], and one is at the château of Langeais; the whereabouts of the fourth, stolen in 1926, is unknown).<sup>5</sup> The set depicts scenes from the life of the saint set within a trompe l'oeil architectural border composed of a base with a running inscription, Corinthian columns at the sides, and a frieze at the top. The designs, which display all the characteristics of Italian Renaissance style, have traditionally been attributed to Andrea Polastron, a Florentine painter, who lived in Tours and worked for Semblançay in the 1520s and was in the service of Francis I by 1532.<sup>6</sup> Because it is undocumented, the place of the *Saint Saturnin* group's manufacture must remain in question, despite the traditional attribution to Tours. However, another set of tapestries is known that certainly was made in Tours: a *Story of Saint Peter*, which survives at Saint-Pierre in Saumur, the church for which it was made (see fig. 199).

Fig. 198. *Saint Peter Giving the Cross to the New Bishop* (at right) from the *Story of Saint Saturnin*. Tapestry design attributed to Andrea Polastron, woven in Tours, ca. 1527. Wool and silk, 259 x 315 cm. Trésor de la Cathédrale, Angers



This is recorded as having been woven between 1538 and 1542 by the Duval workshop, an establishment active in Tours during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, from designs by the Angevin artists Robert Delisle and Jehan Delastre.<sup>7</sup>

#### TOULOUSE

Another town in which a considerable volume of tapestry production seems to have been generated during the second third of the sixteenth century is Toulouse. Fifteen or so weavers belonging to the guild of “Painctres verriers et tailleurs d’images” (painters, glassmakers, and embroiderers) are documented to have been in the town in this period.<sup>8</sup> The extent to which all of them were engaged in weaving or merely acting as agents for products from workshops in the Marche area is uncertain, but one man at least was running a regular workshop. He was Hector Péchault, who delivered sets of tapestries for the brotherhood of Saint Anne of the church of Saint Jacques in 1539 and others for the brotherhood of Saint Anne of the church of Notre-Dame du Taur in 1540–41.<sup>9</sup> Hector was probably related to the Jehan Péchault, who wove various tapestries for the brotherhood of Corps-Saints of the church of Saint-Sernin between 1529 and 1534. Documentation relating to Péchault’s work for Saint-Sernin provides an intriguing insight into the limitations of local production. In 1526 the brotherhood had commissioned twelve tapestries from a workshop in the Low Countries, each one representing “the image and life of each holy saint reposing in the said church” after designs by Jacques Bataille, “the best master in the present city.”<sup>10</sup> For unknown reasons,

however, only three pieces were woven in the Low Countries, three more being consigned to Péchault’s workshop. In 1530 in the presence of two witnesses, a painter and an embroiderer, the brotherhood examined the first of Péchault’s efforts, a tapestry showing the *Martyrdom of Saint Sernin*. The witnesses judged that the faces were rendered much less subtly and the outlines were less good than those in the tapestries recently made in the Netherlands and therefore recommended that Péchault should not be given responsibility for any other pieces. Nonetheless, in 1531, the brotherhood commissioned two more panels, one of *Saint George* and one of *Saint Suzanne*, with dimensions similar to those



Fig. 199. *Saint Peter Healing the Sick* from the *Story of Saint Peter*. Tapestry woven in the Duval workshop, Tours, 1538–42. Wool and silk, 150 x 225 cm. Church of Saint-Pierre, Saumur



of the examples made in the Netherlands. The execution of the *Saint Suzanne* was also severely criticized.<sup>11</sup>

Although these tapestries have been lost, the character of Péc'hault's work is probably demonstrated by fragments of another set that can be attributed to him with some certainty. This group, a *Story of Saint Stephen*, was woven for the Cathedral of Saint-Étienne between 1531 and 1535 (see fig. 200). No documentation identifies the weaver, but the initials I.P. appear on two of the tapestries, indicating that the set should be attributed to Péc'hault's workshop. The character of the original fabric and design is still preserved, despite very considerable reweavings effected in the course of the nineteenth or early twentieth century. While the quality and style of weave reflect the provincial origin of the set and provide an idea of the limitations for which Péc'hault's tapestries were criticized, the design is remarkably Italian in character. The taste for simplified masses, with strong contrasts of light and shade, and the steep perspective of the interiors recall tapestry designs produced in Italy during the first quarter of the sixteenth century such as the *Trivulzio Months*. The architectural trompe l'oeil frames also speak of the inspiration of a contemporary Italian source. Indeed, the border design appears to be based on the strikingly similar frames in Perino del Vaga's *Furti di Giove* tapestries.

It is difficult to tell whether the weaving recorded in Tours and Toulouse was exceptional. In all likelihood the tapestries made there typify the medium-quality work that was probably being produced in a number of other provincial centers in short-lived and now forgotten ateliers. Such centers apparently included Beauvais, Limoges, Bourges, and Nevers, where weavers seem to have been active during the first half of the sixteenth century, according to archival records. Unfortunately, these documents are partial and ambiguous.<sup>12</sup>

#### AUBUSSON AND FELLETIN

Production on a large scale was also taking place contemporaneously in workshops located in the towns of Felletin and Aubusson in the Marche region. Weavers are recorded in Felletin from the late fifteenth century and at Aubusson from the early sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Located at the intersection of routes between Lyon and Clermont and Limoges and Bordeaux, these centers were well placed to benefit from commissions from a wide catchment area. Local weavers treated figurative subjects, but most of the documented Marche products were verdure and armorials, with motifs typically displayed on bands of colors, like those Catherine de Foix, dame de Duras, ordered from the Felletin weavers Gabriel Sautier and Pierre Moyaran in 1518. The commission comprised three sets of armorial tapestries, each made up of ten pieces, with



Fig. 200. *The Birth of Saint Stephen* from the *Story of Saint Stephen*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Jehan Péc'hault, Toulouse, 1532. Wool, 590 x 668 cm. Cathedral of Toulouse

grounds of alternating stripes of colors (one specified as red and yellow, another as tan, blue, and white), along with six table covers and twelve carpets, also with bands of color.<sup>14</sup> The low valuations placed on such tapestries in contemporary inventories indicate the low material quality that they represented. Although it can be difficult to identify tapestries from the Marche area because they do not carry town or workshop marks, documents and large numbers of fairly coarse verdure, armorials, and figurative hangings that survive in central and southern France provide a suggestive picture of local products. Typical of the figurative tapestries are various sets of the perennially popular *Nine Worthies*, for which several cartoon series seem to have existed in the Felletin and Aubusson region. One example is the set provided to the château of Chauray at Saint-Maixent-l'École in the early 1530s, of which seven pieces survive today in the Langeais château.<sup>15</sup> The circumstances surrounding the manufacture of such sets are indicated by a contract drawn up in Bourges in August 1546 between two Felletin weavers, Léonard Deveu and Joseph Laurent, and Jean Charrier, a bourgeois of the town, to produce a ten-piece set of the *Worthies* on a millefleurs ground. The contract provides precise details regarding the dimensions of each of the tapestries, which were to be delivered by the Feast of Saint Martin the following winter. As Lefébure has noted, the weavers must have relied on other workshops to help them realize the commission so quickly.<sup>16</sup>

## PARIS

Inevitably, the leading area of French production was Paris, the principal center of trade and government and the intermittent focal point of court life. Relatively few Paris tapestries have been identified because, as we have noted, weavers were not required to place their marks or city marks on them before the beginning of the seventeenth century. Thus, reconstruction and understanding of the Parisian industry is essentially based on the evidence of documents. The most important of these are some one hundred fifty notarial records consisting of contracts between clients and weavers and subcontracts between weavers and other weavers drawn up during the second third of the sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Although these documents relate to only a small part of what must have been a much larger activity, they provide a vivid and consistent picture of the Parisian tapestry industry and allow us to distinguish the character and quality of its products from those of the leading Netherlandish centers.

The documents reflect the activity of thirty or forty master weavers, of whom a small number, including Pierre de Larris, Girard and Guy Laurens, Louis de Cambry, Pierre Dumellin, and Antoine and Jacques Huiselin, evidently received a steady stream of commissions for figurative tapestries from patrons all over France. Some of the more successful craftsmen evidently enjoyed close relations with the Netherlandish industry, acting as go-betweens for French patrons ordering Netherlandish tapestries—on occasion woven from French designs—or purchasing tapestries from the stock of Netherlandish merchants. For example, Louis de Cambry had a brother Jérôme who was a merchant in Antwerp, while his uncle Michel, who adjudicated a dispute between the two brothers over a set of Netherlandish tapestries, was a senior officer in the administration of Tournai.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the other masters, however, were men of relatively modest means and owned no more than one or two looms. For example, the postmortem inventory of the possessions of Pierre Blasse, one of the two master weavers responsible for the *Saint Mamas* tapestries (see cat. no. 56), lists two looms, one 4 meters and the other 3 meters wide. To expedite the completion of commissions, therefore, patrons frequently placed their orders in more than one workshop (as with the *Saint Mamas* tapestries, which were made by Blasse and Jacques Langlois), or the master weaver who had originally been awarded the project subcontracted parts of it to others. Sometimes we find that weavers subcontracted other craftsmen to help them make a single tapestry on a single loom. In all these cases, the subcontractor agreed to a day rate or a price per ell, as stipulated by the contractor. While most of this activity seems to have taken place in Parisian workshops,

occasionally weavers agreed to relocate to the patron's residence to complete a commission within a required term.

Most of the contracts specify the nature of the materials to be used, which as a rule conform to a general standard. Typical is a contract drawn up in 1550 between Jean de La Chesnaye, councilor of the privy council and general of finance, and Louis de Cambry, who agreed to make a seven-piece set of the *Story of Jupiter* in medallions surrounded by grotesques on a white ground with red borders. Cambry agreed to "to make the faces of the figures in the said tapestry of fine *sayette* and the rest of the tapestry of good French wool, highlighted with three silks, yellow, green, and blue and as much silk above the border as below, well and properly made and packed, as it should be, in the opinion of the masters and in judges of the guild."<sup>19</sup> The stipulation of *sayette*—an especially fine wool—for the faces and of the colors yellow, green, and blue for the silk of the highlights of the costumes is customary in many of the extant contracts.<sup>20</sup> Occasionally there is mention of white and red, and very rarely other colors. Clients took care to ensure the quality of their purchases, paying attention to detail, as demonstrated by La Chesnaye's demand that the borders of his tapestries be executed in silk. Other contracts require that the faces are to be executed without painting and that the quality of weaving and materials are to be as good as a specified precedent purchased from a particular supplier.<sup>21</sup> Only two of the documents mention the inclusion of silver or gold thread, suggesting that use of these materials was very rare.<sup>22</sup>



Fig. 201. *Grotesques*. Tapestry probably woven in Paris, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 336 x 357 cm. Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris





Fig. 202. *Grotesques with Cartouche Depicting the Death of Joab*. Tapestry woven in Paris, ca. 1566–85. Wool and silk, 417 x 527 cm. Mobilier National, Paris

Many of the contracts refer to the tapestries as “haute lisse,” which some historians have taken as an indication that the predominant method of production at this date was the high-warp loom, rather than the low-warp loom commonly used in the Netherlandish centers.<sup>23</sup> In fact, this is by no means certain. The term, akin to “haute couture,” seems to have enjoyed wide currency during the medieval era, when it was applied to tapestries and good-quality textiles in general to distinguish them from coarser forms. Thus, its use in the sixteenth century may simply reflect a continuation of this tradition.<sup>24</sup>

The contracts reflect the broad range of commissions the Parisian workshops won. They show that although a significant portion of the projects were for items of fairly modest size, includ-

ing bed hangings, portieres, horse trappings, and table carpets, the larger workshops consistently received orders for figurative altarpieces and choir tapestries for religious institutions as well as armorial, mythological, and decorative pieces for secular patrons.<sup>25</sup> From the 1550s grotesque tapestries became increasingly popular, among them the La Chesnaye group of 1550 and the set of grotesques made by Antoine Fabert in Paris and purchased in the same year by the brother of the duchess of Étampes, Charles de Pisseleu, bishop of Condom. It has been suggested that a tapestry with a central medallion featuring an unidentified classical subject surrounded with erotic and macabre grotesques, including a death’s head wearing a bishop’s miter, may derive from that set (fig. 201).<sup>26</sup> Whether or not this is the case, the piece, whose borders are similar to those of

the *Saint Mamas* panels, which were woven in Paris in the early 1540s, probably provides a good idea of the sort of grotesques that Fabert was executing. A later example, with a central medallion showing the death of Joab surrounded by grotesques (fig. 202), woven between about 1566 and 1585 for Claude de la Châtre, governor of Berry and marshal of France, with some likelihood can also be ascribed to a Parisian manufactory.<sup>27</sup>

Most of the extant contracts indicate that the Parisian weavers of the sixteenth century worked from designs, generally colored, that had been supplied by the patron. There is little evidence that merchants of Paris held significant stocks of cartoons, unlike the Greniers in the late fifteenth century and contemporary Antwerp and Brussels tradesmen. Some of the Parisians must have owned cartoons for decorative subjects, and Charles Carmoy, for one, evidently owned the cartoons for a set of grotesque tapestries.

Although these circumstances favored the production of tapestries of medium quality, some were of notable material and artistic character, as demonstrated by two sets that probably can be attributed to the Paris manufactories. The most striking of these, and the only one that can be documented to a specific Parisian workshop, is a group that depicts the *Story of Saint Mamas* (see cat. no. 56). The designs for these were commissioned from Jean Cousin the elder (ca. 1500–ca. 1560) in 1543 by Claude de Longwy, cardinal of Givry and bishop of Langres, for the high price of 200 *écus d'or*. Made as a gift for Langres Cathedral, the eight-piece set, of which three panels survive, was woven between February 1544 and 1545 in the Paris workshops of Pierre Blasse I or II and Jacques Langlois. Cousin probably moved to Paris from Sens about 1540. Nothing is known of his work from the 1520s and 1530s, but he was evidently a painter of stature and repute by the time of his relocation, and he was subsequently much in demand for projects for a variety of decorative arts, ranging from stained glass to embroideries and tapestries.<sup>28</sup> Prior to winning the *Saint Mamas* commission, he provided designs in 1541 for a now-lost eight-piece set devoted to the *Life of Saint Genevieve* for the Paris brotherhood of Sainte-Geneviève du Mont.<sup>29</sup> He is also credited with taking a hand in the design of a set treating the *Story of Diana* on the basis of its stylistic and narrative parallels with the *Saint Mamas* tapestries. The *Saint Mamas* set clearly shows the influence of French court art, specifically the mannerist aesthetic developed by artists at Fontainebleau, in its extremes of scale, vast landscapes, contrasts of calm and violent movement, elaborate classical buildings, and strapwork borders. However, Cousin employed other elements here that are grounded in the Netherlandish design traditions, including the incorporation of multiple narratives within a single scene, intricate surface decoration, and attention to landscape and narrative

detail. It is interesting to note that Cousin's contract with Longwy for this group stipulated that the cartoons were to return to the patron after use, while the contract with the weavers stated that they were to take special care of the cartoons, indicating that the cardinal valued them as works of art in their own right.

The second group of outstanding tapestries that can be assigned to the Paris workshops is an eight-piece set of the *Story of Diana*. This carries the insignia and devices—that is, crescents, deltas, and interlaced D—of Henry II and his mistress, Diane de Poitiers, on the basis of which it is assumed to have been woven during the 1550s.<sup>30</sup> According to a sixteenth-century tradition, the group was made for the château of Anet, constructed from 1543 for Diane de Poitiers from designs by Philibert de L'Orme. Although the dimensions of the hangings correspond closely to those of the principal chambers, the theory that they were made for the site is by no means indisputable, especially since Diane did not move to Anet until after Henry's death in 1559. All eight pieces survived into recent times, but four were destroyed by fire in Paris in 1997.<sup>31</sup> A direct identification of Diane as the goddess Diana is supported by various details: for example, in the scene *Diana Imploring Jupiter for the Gift of Chastity* (fig. 203), the hem of the goddess's robes are woven with the letters H and D.<sup>32</sup> Scholars who have studied the iconography of the set maintain that the subjects were carefully chosen to resonate with contemporary events. Thus it is said that *Diana Imploring Jupiter for the Gift of Chastity* represents Diane's rejection of Protestantism; the *Death of Orion* recalls the rivalry between Diane and the duchess of Étampes and the death of La Châtaigneraie in a duel at Jarnac in 1547; and that *Diana Saves Iphigenia* is an allegory of Mary Stuart.<sup>33</sup>

The stylistic and narrative similarities between the *Diana* and *Saint Mamas* sets suggest that Cousin must have played an important part in the conception of the former; in addition, a preparatory drawing for the scene of the *Death of Meleager* in the *Diana* panels has traditionally been attributed to his hand.<sup>34</sup> Yet the designer of this group remains unidentified, and the situation is confused by the fact that several of the tapestries share motifs in common with a set of drawings of the *Story of Apollo and Diana*, variously attributed in the past to Cousin and to Luca Penni (ca. 1500–1557), which evidently served as the *modelli* for engravings by Étienne Delaune. More recently, Béguin has tentatively attributed two of these drawings to Charles Carmoy, a painter from Orléans who was one of the French artists active at Fontainebleau from the late 1530s. Carmoy worked under Claude Badouin on the cartoons for the Galerie François I during the early 1540s and was the “peintre attitré” (appointed painter) of Diane de Poitiers in 1551.<sup>35</sup> Although no autograph work by this artist is known, the fact of his official



role under Diane de Poitiers makes it quite plausible that he participated in the production of the *Diana* set. Following Béguin's lead, Bertrand has suggested that the preparatory drawing for the *Death of Meleager* may also be in Carmoy's hand, perhaps indicating that he was responsible for developing the *modelli* and cartoons for the *Diana* tapestries from initial sketches by Cousin.<sup>36</sup>

In summary, the documents show that a sizable community of independent weavers flourished in Paris and that these craftsmen collaborated as necessary to carry out a relatively copious volume of work. However, they did not produce tapestries of the high quality typical of the main Netherlandish centers, and the close involvement between rich merchants and leading workshops that

characterized Brussels was absent from Paris. Yet, when rich clients provided excellent designs and the necessary resources for fine materials, the Parisian weavers were capable of producing tapestries of very good quality, as evidenced by the *Saint Mamas* set and, possibly, the *Diana* set.

#### FONTAINEBLEAU

The very high quality of the tapestries woven at Fontainebleau for Francis I during the 1540s also testifies to the ability of the Parisian weavers when time and funding permitted. Located about forty miles southwest of Paris, Fontainebleau was almost entirely reconstructed in the years between 1528 and 1540, providing enor-



Fig. 203. *Diana Imploring Jupiter for the Gift of Chastity* from the *Story of Diana*. Tapestry design attributed to Jean Cousin the elder, woven in Paris, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 464 x 407 cm. Musée des Antiquités, Rouen





Fig. 204. View of the Galerie François I in the chateau of Fontainebleau

mous creative opportunities for the Italian artists Francis had attracted to his court. Most notable among them were Rosso Fiorentino (1494–1540) and Francesco Primaticcio (1504–1570), who arrived in 1530 and 1532, respectively. Working from designs by these two artists, an army of French, Italian, and Netherlandish painters and craftsmen decorated the interiors of the palace with stuccos, frescoes, and murals executed in the distinctive Mannerist style of the Fontainebleau school. The character of this style is most famously epitomized by the long stucco and plaster gallery, the Galerie François I, that Rosso and Primaticcio devised and executed between 1533 and 1540 to connect the Cour de l'Ovale and the Cour du Cheval Blanc (fig. 204).<sup>37</sup>

It was in the hothouse of creative activity at Fontainebleau that Francis established a tapestry workshop in 1539 under the super-

vision of Philibert Babou de la Bourdaisière, the Surintendant des Bâtiments Royaux.<sup>38</sup> Considering Francis's love of tapestries by both Netherlandish and Italian designers, this was hardly a surprising venture. It was founded six years after the reorganization of the tapestry workshop at Ferrara and about the same time that the manufactory at Mantua was created. Because close links existed between these centers and the artists who worked for Francis, it seems reasonable to suppose that the Italian initiatives encouraged the king to set up his own shop.<sup>39</sup>

The only product certainly attributable to the Fontainebleau workshop is a six-piece set of tapestries that provides a *trompe l'oeil* re-creation of Francis's great gallery (see cat. no. 55). The cartoons were prepared by Claude Badouin and other artists, and a payment for materials, including gold, silver, and silk thread, in



February 1540 suggests that work must have begun shortly after that date.<sup>40</sup> It has generally been assumed that the set must have been finished by July 1547, a few months after Francis's death, when a final payment was made to one of the weavers. Royal accounts provide the names of about fifteen weavers who participated in this project, several of whom also operated workshops in Paris. They were paid on a daily basis.

The purpose of the original set and the reason for its choice of theme remain subjects of debate. Assuming that a tapestry duplicate of a plaster gallery would have been redundant for Francis himself and seeking to explain the location of the set in the Habsburg collection, rather than the collection of the French crown, various historians have proposed that the group may have been conceived as a gift for Charles V. They hypothesize that the project was initiated in the brief period of rapprochement during which Charles passed through France in 1539 and stayed at Fontainebleau, where he must have admired Francis's new gallery, the jewel in the crown of the French king's patronage.<sup>41</sup> This line of argument posits that although Charles and Francis were at war again by 1542, the tapestries may eventually have been presented to the emperor in 1544, following the original spirit of the enterprise, when Eleanor, Charles's sister and Francis's wife, visited Brussels. In fact, the basic premise underlying this theory seems fallacious. The Rosso and Primaticcio gallery was one of the greatest artistic projects achieved under Francis's patronage and embodied a panegyric on his reign. Because of its stature and its subject, then, it seems unlikely that the set would have been deemed suitable as a gift to Charles V. Rather, it is more probable that Francis's pride in the gallery would have led him to commission a portable version of it. Moreover, the *trompe l'oeil* character of the design and the notion of re-creating stucco and fresco in textile form are just the sort of artistic conceits that would have appealed to the king. It is interesting to note that Badouin was paid for painting *trompe l'oeil* tapestry at Fontainebleau at the same date he prepared the tapestry cartoons.<sup>42</sup>

Questions surround not only this *trompe l'oeil* set of tapestries but also the subsequent activity of the Fontainebleau workshop. Although sweeping claims for the workshop's scope and magnitude have been made in the past, recent historians have been more cautious in their estimation of its longevity. Indeed, they suggest that perhaps it was established only to produce the gallery tapestries, a glorified version of the documented practice whereby Parisian weavers temporarily relocated to a patron's residence to execute a specific commission.<sup>43</sup> There is no concrete proof of any substantial production of tapestries at Fontainebleau for the French crown after Francis's death in 1547. None of the works listed in the

1551 inventory of the crown tapestries in Paris is attributed to Fontainebleau (most of the high-quality pieces are assigned to Brussels). Henry II (r. 1547–59) was not as attached to Fontainebleau as his father, Francis, and it may be significant that when he did found a tapestry workshop in 1551, he located it in Paris.

Nonetheless, we have evidence that some weaving continued at Fontainebleau after Francis's death. There is, for example, a document published by Grodecki, a contract of 1547 between Pierre Le Briais, "tapissier ordinaire du Roi demeurant a Fontainebleau" (tapestry worker, in ordinary to the king, living at Fontainebleau) and Isabeau Cotereau, wife of Jacques d'Angennes, seigneur of Rambouillet, for a set of nine tapestries of grotesques, to be woven from designs provided by the patron. According to the contract this was to be carried out in fine *sayette* and silk and, in addition to the "couleurs acoustumées" (usual colors) was to include reds, crimsons, gray, violet, and white where necessary, a gamut of colors similar to that employed for the Galerie François I. This clearly confirms that weavers were active at Fontainebleau after Francis died, whether or not it was normal for them to work for nonroyal patrons.<sup>44</sup> That the manufactory continued to operate there was attested by Philibert de L'Orme, who claimed in his biography that the Fontainebleau tapestry works fell under his jurisdiction in his capacity as Surintendant des Bâtiments Royaux, a position he occupied between April 3, 1548, and July 12, 1559.<sup>45</sup> More evidence to this effect is suggested by a letter sent by Primaticcio to Catherine de' Medici in 1565 regarding his preparations for the casting of four "Vertus" intended for Henry II's tomb. Here he wrote that he had been planning to use the room in which he had cast bronzes for Francis I in 1543 but discovered that it was now occupied by "molti telari da far tappezzerie" (many looms for making tapestries). Unfortunately, Primaticcio did not say whether the looms were in active use.<sup>46</sup>

While it is thus likely that some tapestries were woven at Fontainebleau in the late 1540s and the 1550s, no product from this period has yet been identified. No sixteenth-century inventory of the tapestries at Fontainebleau survives, but a hint of what has been lost is suggested by the seventeenth-century account of Arnold van Buchell, who recorded "les plus précieuses" hangings in the Salle de Bal, including "a tapestry with the embroidered emblem of Francis I": a salamander in a fire with the motto "A fierce bear, gliding eagles, and a twisted snake / Your flames will now consume, salamander."<sup>47</sup> One example perhaps attributable to Fontainebleau is a high-quality set of grotesques with medallions depicting the classical gods and bearing the monograms and devices of Henry II and Diane de Poitiers (see fig. 205). There are four surviving fragments of this set, which dates from the 1550s

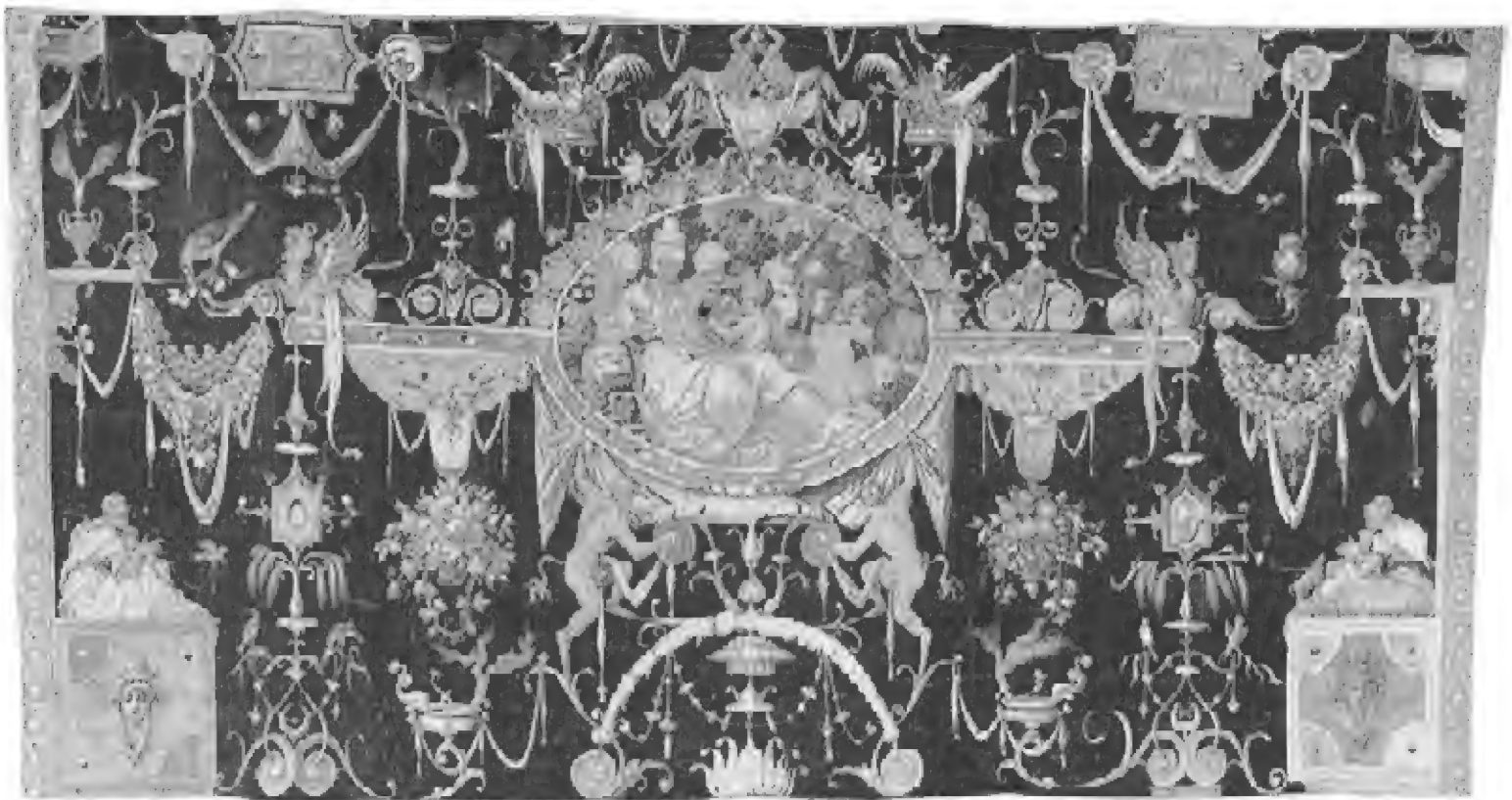


Fig. 205. *Cybèle* (fragment) from a set of *Grotesques with Classical Gods*. Tapestry probably woven in Paris or Fontainebleau, ca. 1550. Wool and silk, 242 x 452 cm. Mobilier National, Paris

(Mobilier National, Paris, and Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Lyon), and they demonstrate a quality of weaving comparable to that of the panels that imitate the decoration of the Galerie François I, albeit without the metallic thread featured in the trompe l'oeil group.<sup>48</sup> However, given the evident ability of the Parisian weavers, the set may just as well have been woven in the workshop Henry II established in the Hôpital de la Trinité in Paris or elsewhere in the city. The design has traditionally been attributed to Primaticcio, but it could have been executed by various artists who worked under his influence and had access to a copy of the work of Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, whose grotesque engravings may have provided the prototypes for some of its motifs. One artist who immediately springs to mind is Jean Cousin the elder, whose decorative designs incorporate a number of similar devices and who carried out similar work, to wit, a set of designs for a chamber of embroidered grotesques for the duchess of Nevers.<sup>49</sup>

#### OTHER CENTRALIZED INITIATIVES

Francis's motivation in founding the Fontainebleau workshop appears to have been the desire to provide high-quality tapestries for himself. By contrast, his son Henry II, had a broader vision and made a more long-lasting initiative. This he did in 1551 with the creation

of the workshop at the Hôpital de la Trinité, located in the Rue Saint-Denis in Paris, whose mission was to take in orphans and poor children and to train them in various trades, including tapestry making.<sup>50</sup> Although nothing of the early production of this atelier is known, that it may have developed into a sizable establishment capable of producing moderate-quality tapestries is evidenced by a set representing the *Life of Christ*. Two fragments of this *Life of Christ* survive (Mobilier National and Musée du Moyen-Âge, both Paris) along with twenty-seven preparatory drawings (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris).<sup>51</sup> The tapestries were woven in 1594 from designs by Henri Lerambert for the church of Saint-Merri in Paris, under the direction of Maurice Dubout. Dubout had trained in the Trinité workshop and was to become an important and influential figure in the development of Parisian tapestry manufacturing in the early seventeenth century under the initiatives taken by Henry IV to establish a national industry that would rival that of the Low Countries.

Henry II's example seems to have been the model for a similar enterprise in Bordeaux. Four years after the foundation of the Trinité atelier, Auger Hunault, abbot of Sainte-Croix de Bordeaux, drew up a contract with the Paris weaver Guy Laurens. Laurens agreed to spend four years at one of the abbot's houses,



where he would teach young boys and girls how to make high-loom tapestries and knotted carpets.<sup>52</sup> Nothing more is known of this workshop.

Knowledge of sixteenth-century French tapestry production remains very sketchy, but the documentary evidence provides the basis for detailed research. Records, many published by Grodecki, offer a wealth of information about the social and economic circumstances of French patrons, artists, and weavers, yielding a picture of

the complex world in which tapestries were commissioned and made. Yet, much more work remains to be done on these subjects and in terms of identifying an extant French production from these years. A more rigorous standard of identification must be developed, especially for the many pieces that have appeared at auction over the last fifty years. These all too often are generically classified as Netherlandish, although they bear strong stylistic affinities with objects that probably originated in French manufactories.

1. Especially Guiffrey 1885–86; Guiffrey 1915a; Göbel 1928; Grodecki 1985; and various articles by Bertrand (see bibliography). For recent general discussion with further bibliography, see Joubert and Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995.
2. For example, Göbel 1928, pp. 269–323; Heinz 1963, pp. 87–101; and Weigert 1956, pp. 73, 76–79, 85.
3. Cavallo 1993, pp. 71–73.
4. Göbel 1928, p. 264. For a recent bibliography on Tours, see Bertrand 1996, p. 299, n. 13.
5. Bertrand 1996, pp. 271–74, 298–99.
6. Jarry 1973, pp. 44–45 (with bibliog.). Previous accounts have confused Polastron with another Florentine, Andrea Sguazzella, or Chiazella, a pupil of Andrea del Sarto, who visited France in 1518 at the invitation of Francis I; Bertrand 1996, p. 299, n. 9; Bertrand 1998, p. 144.
7. Bertrand 1996, pp. 274, 299 n. 13.
8. Bertrand 1995, pp. 138–39.
9. Ibid., p. 140.
10. “[L]’ymage et vie d’ung chescun corps saint repposant en ladite eglise”; “le meilleur maître de la présente cité”; ibid., pp. 133, 135, n. 47.
11. Ibid., pp. 140–41.
12. Göbel 1928, pp. 208, 334, 338, 345.
13. Ibid., pp. 235–37, 244–45.
14. Bertrand 1995, p. 136.
15. Jarry 1973, pp. 50–53.
16. Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, p. 104.
17. Guiffrey 1915a, pp. 243–77; Göbel 1928, pp. 26–33; Grodecki 1985, pp. 30–35, 275–99.
18. Grodecki 1985, p. 31.
19. “[F]aire les visaiges des personnaiges de lad. tapisserie de fine sayette et tout le reste d’icelle tapisserie de bonne laine françoise rehaussée de troys soyes jaulne, verd et blue et autant de soye au hault des bordures comme au bas, bien et devement faictes et frappées, comme il appartient, au dire des maistres et jurez dud. mestier”; ibid., p. 282, no. 390.
20. Ibid., p. 32.
21. Ibid., for example, pp. 290 no. 409, 299 no. 430.
22. Ibid., p. 32.
23. Ibid., pp. 31–32; Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 100–101.
24. For discussion of contemporary terminology, see Salet 1988, pp. 219–25; Joubert 1993, pp. 24–26; and Joubert 1999.
25. Grodecki 1985, passim.
26. Paris 1965a, p. 14; Paris 1972, p. 345, no. 452; Bertrand 1995, p. 136, n. 50.

27. Paris 1965a, p. 14; Paris 1972, pp. 344–45.
28. Zerner 1996, pp. 222, 225–44, 246–85.
29. Bertrand 1997, pp. 46–47.
30. Standen 1975; Standen 1985, vol. 1, p. 249; Lloyd 1988; Bertrand 1997, pp. 46, 49–65.
31. The subjects of the lost tapestries were *Jupiter Changing the Lycidians into Frogs*, the *Death of Meleager*, the *Death of Orion*, and *Diana Saves Iphigenia*. *Diana Imploring Jupiter for the Gift of Chastity* is at the Musée des Antiquités, Rouen, while the *Drowning of Britomartis* and the *Blasphemy of Niobe* are at the Metropolitan Museum. The *Triumph of Diana* is in a New York private collection; Lloyd 1988, p. 4; Bertrand 1997, p. 49.
32. Lloyd 1988, p. 21.
33. Ibid., pp. 13, 18; Bertrand 1997, pp. 59–60.
34. Bertrand 1997, pp. 62–63 (with bibliog.).
35. Béguin 1991, p. 11, figs. 12–14; Béguin 1995, p. 195, n. 9.
36. Bertrand 1997, p. 64.
37. Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 42–52.
38. According to Schneebalg-Perelman 1971a, p. 268, n. 36, the workshop was located in the west wing of the Cour du Cheval Blanc.
39. Göbel 1928, pp. 37–46; Heinz 1963, pp. 251–56, 329; Pressouyre 1972; Grodecki 1978; I. Denis in Grove 1996, vol. 11, p. 262; G. Gruber 1993; G. Gruber 1995; Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 367–68, 384–86.
40. Grodecki 1978, p. 215.
41. Jestaz 1973, p. 54; Schneebalg-Perelman 1982, pp. 146, 185.
42. “Audit Badouyn, peintre, pour avoir vacqué tant à la façon des patrons des tapisseries, que à la façon et peinture d’un tableau à frais en façon de tapisserie, contre la muraille, en la salle des poisles, au grand pavillon près l’estang dudit lieu”; Laborde 1877–80, vol. 1, p. 204.
43. I. Denis in Grove 1996, vol. 11, p. 262.
44. Grodecki 1985, pp. 316–17.
45. Fenaille 1923, p. 92.
46. Pressouyre 1969, p. 226, n. 1.
47. Quoted from Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 368, 468, n. 40.
48. For the two fragments at the Mobilier National, see Paris 1965a, p. 14; Culan 1968, p. 23; and Paris 1972, p. 343. For the two in Lyon, which are smaller, see Blazy in Blazy et al. 1996, pp. 32–33.
49. Zerner 1996, p. 255. For comparable design elements, see ibid., pp. 228, 229, 259, 232.
50. Göbel 1928, p. 48; Weigert 1962, p. 95.
51. Fenaille 1923, pp. 105–17.
52. Grodecki 1985, p. 35.

## *The Unity of the State*

From a six-piece set of the *Gallery of Francis I*  
 Cartoons executed by Claude Badouin and others, after  
 Rosso Fiorentino and Francesco Primaticcio, ca. 1539  
 Woven at Fontainebleau, between 1540 and 1547  
 Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
 330 x 620 cm (10 ft. 9 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. x 20 ft. 4 $\frac{1}{8}$  in.)  
 8 warps per cm  
 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (T CV-6)

PROVENANCE: ca. 1540–47, woven for Francis I at  
 Fontainebleau; 1688, imperial collection, Vienna;  
 1688–90, restored by Jean Trechet in Vienna; by  
 descent in the imperial collection; 1914, Kunst-  
 historisches Museum, Vienna.

REFERENCES: Baldass 1920, nos. 155–60; Dimier 1927,  
 p. 166; de Tervarent 1952, pp. 28–45; Panofsky and  
 Panofsky 1958; Chastel 1968, pp. 186–88; Pressouyre  
 1970, pp. 123–37; Coural in Paris 1972, pp. 338–42 (with  
 bibliog.); Jestaz 1973; G. Gruber 1993; Cox-Rearick  
 1995, pp. 384–85; G. Gruber 1995.

CONDITION: The tapestry is in good condition, having  
 been restored in 1987. Large portions of the grisaille  
 figures have been rewoven, probably by Jean Trechet,  
 who undertook the first documented restoration  
 between 1688 and 1690. He was also probably respon-  
 sible for alterations to the French symbols.<sup>1</sup>

The *Unity of the State* is part of a six-piece set that  
 is the only certain product of the tapestry work-  
 shop that Francis I established at Fontainebleau  
 during the 1540s. The set comprises a trompe  
 l'oeil reproduction of part of the architectural  
 decoration of the grand Galerie François I at  
 Fontainebleau. The gallery, situated between the  
 Cour de l'Ovale and the Cour du Cheval Blanc,  
 was built between 1528 and 1532 after designs by  
 Gilles Le Breton. Francis I then commissioned  
 Rosso Fiorentino and Primaticcio to decorate the  
 space. The seven bays on each of the gallery's  
 long walls, originally separated by windows,  
 were treated as individual units in the design.  
 Wainscoting carved by Francisco Scibec de Carpi  
 served as a base, above which the designers cre-  
 ated an elaborate fusion of painted figural scenes  
 with sculptural frames. In each case a central  
 fresco is surrounded by a rich framing of scroll-  
 work grotesques in stucco, which incorporates  
 on each side smaller fresco panels with subjects  
 relating to the central scene. The salamander,  
 the king's emblem, appears above all of the  
 major panels.











Detail of cat. no. 55

The gallery's imagery glorifies Francis I in his virtue and wisdom, emphasizing his kingship by the grace of God and portraying him as the unifying force of the realm. He is also depicted as an enlightened ruler devoted to the arts and sciences but ready to lead his forces into war. Utilizing emblem, fable, and allegory, the frescoes show the king both as a ruler committed to his people and as an idealized hero.<sup>2</sup> Specific historic events like the tragic death of the dauphin are also included.

Though the six tapestries were probably made for Francis I, their purpose, like the meaning of the gallery's decoration, is not entirely clear. In all likelihood, they were produced as a virtuoso

re-creation in sumptuous materials of one of the most important works of art made for Francis I.

#### *Description and Iconography*

This tapestry reproduces the decoration of the sixth compartment from the left on the south wall of the gallery. Francis I is depicted in the center of the main panel dressed as a Roman emperor, adorned with a general's sash and a laurel wreath. In his left hand he holds a pomegranate, which appears to be included as a symbol of concord, the meaning subsequently placed on it in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (first published in 1593). A youth kneeling in front of Francis I presents him with another

pomegranate. Grouped around the king are representatives of the various social classes, some in classical costume. Soldiers mix peacefully with civil dignitaries, scholars, burghers, and peasants. In the background on the right a man is embracing a small child, an eloquent image of peaceful times. The background also displays splendid palace architecture. The meaning of the central scene has not been disputed. As early as 1642 Dan declared that it was a representation of the good order established by the king in both civil and military affairs. The many-seeded pomegranate in Francis's hand symbolizes the unity of the king with his subjects, the sole guarantee of a flourishing



realm.<sup>3</sup> The king's emblematic salamander assumes an appropriately dominant pose above the central panel, which is surrounded by a massive wreath of leaves and fruits that echoes the form of that worn by the monarch.

Interpreting the figures in the tall oval panels on either side and in the lower margin is more difficult. On the left two male wrestlers are engaged in an unequal struggle. One has his arms tied behind his back, while the other appears to be throwing his weight into throttling his opponent with both arms. On the right two men stand in a boat, the one behind embracing the one in front. Their heads, turned toward each other in profile, are positioned so that their open mouths appear as one. The two determine the boat's direction with their movement. Göbel linked these figures to the Labors of Hercules: on the right Hercules is crossing Oceanus in a golden boat lent to him by Apollo; and on the left the hero is slaying Cacus.<sup>4</sup> While the deeds of Hercules were frequently employed to suggest a monarch's superhuman qualities, the identification is not convincing in this case because the defeat of a bound opponent would bring little credit to Hercules or, by association, to the king. A more likely reading was proposed by the Panofskys, who saw these scenes as allegorical depictions of discord and concord.<sup>5</sup>

In the bottom cartouche a ruler sits in heroic nudity on a golden throne. Monumental columns serve as symbols of majesty and suggest a spatial context. The monarch bends forward in anticipation as a messenger rushes toward him from the right. The import of the message is reflected in the agitation of the onlookers. For Göbel, the prominent placement of the horses on the right identified the scene as the presentation of the horses of Diomedes before King Eurystheus at Mycenae.<sup>6</sup> An alternative interpretation is suggested by an engraving of Antonio Fantuzzi (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), probably produced after a drawing by Rosso, which incorporates a main figure that resembles that of Francis I in the central panel in type, pose, and attributes of laurel wreath and pomegranate.<sup>7</sup> From the attire and rayed crown, the Panofskys identified this figure as the Gallic chieftain Vercingetorix.<sup>8</sup> As he was the first leader to unite transalpine Gaul, the pomegranate is appropriate to him as well. Julius Caesar, in *De bello gallico* (7.29.7), described him as the man through whose will all Gaul became



Fig. 206. *The Unity of the State*. Fresco by Rosso Fiorentino, ca. 1540–47. Galerie François I, château of Fontainebleau

unified and, because of that unity, impossible to conquer. Vercingetorix accordingly symbolizes the invincibility of a unified France. However, the Panofskys suggested that if the figure of Francis in the central panel is an allusion to Vercingetorix, the scene in the margin might represent the moment when Caesar received word of the Gallic revolt under Vercingetorix's leadership. Caesar admitted that this was one of the few moments in his life when he found himself in a very difficult position (7.29.6). Certainly, anyone who gave Caesar pause was a formidable opponent.

The iconographic relationship between the decoration of the different bays in the Galerie François I is unclear. There is no surviving manuscript source for the program, and the frescoes have suffered from repeated restorations and overpainting. Interpretation has been made even more difficult by Rosso's tendency to be willfully obscure: he made no distinction in his presentation between religious subjects and secular ones, and he mixed iconographic elements from the most diverse contexts. As a consequence, the meaning of the program has been the subject of much discussion and debate.<sup>9</sup>

One can only guess the identity of the author of the program, though it was doubtless influenced in part by Francis I himself. A likely

candidate would be the diplomat and humanist Lazare de Baif, who was largely responsible for Rosso's appointment at Fontainebleau, although it is possible that de Baif was too much the strict antiquarian to have come up with such an unorthodox concept.<sup>10</sup> One source for the scheme may have been the *Emblemata* of Andrea Alciati, whose illustrations are reflected in the style and motifs of Fontainebleau's decor.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Conception and Design of the Tapestries*

The six tapestries now in Vienna reproduce the six easternmost compartments of the gallery's south wall. The central scenes of the other five pieces represented, respectively, the *Combat of the Centaurs and the Lapiths*, the *Loss of Perpetual Youth*, the *Death of Adonis*, *Danae*, and *Cleobis and Biton*. It is unclear why these six bays were chosen for reproduction. While it is possible that a tapestry version of the entire program was originally envisioned, the fact that the cartoon painter, Claude Badouin, is documented to have been paid for cartoons of only "certains tableaux" from the gallery argues against this. It is also possible that a larger project may simply have been curtailed by Francis's death in 1547.

The tapestries not only reproduce the central paintings of the bays and their stucco framing but also suggest their architectural





Detail of cat. no. 55

context by including portions of the gallery's ceiling and the top molding of the wainscoting. The perspective of the designs suggests that the tapestries were intended to hang at the same height as the frescoes, to present a *trompe l'oeil* reproduction of the decor. In order to effect the translation of a three-dimensional decorative scheme into the single medium of tapestry, the cartoonist made a number of changes to the design. First, to enhance the effect of the illusion, elements of the faux sculptural work were extended above their surroundings (for example, gamboling putti in the tapestry of the *Combat of the Centaurs and the Lapiths* overlap the stucco framing above them). More generally, the design was elaborated and enriched with decorative detailing and color. For example, in the *Unity of the State*, the sculpted fruit garlands have become polychrome festoons suspended from lions' heads of gleaming metal-like appearance. The gilt-mosaic wall on either side of the salamander is now adorned with masks framed with garlands, and medallions have been added next to the bottom cartouche. The garment of the old man gesturing so eloquently to the king, monotone in the fresco (fig. 206), in the tapestry has an elaborate brocade pattern, and the bare ground at his feet has become dotted with flowers in the woven version. This emphasis on decorative values was consistent with the tradition of tapestry design, and in contrast to the character of Rosso's preparatory designs for the gallery, as recorded by contemporary engravings.<sup>12</sup> In places there are even additional figures in the stucco framing as in the tapestry *Cleobis and Biton*. All these changes suggest that great care was taken in the preparation of the tapestry cartoons and that the translation was undertaken with artistry and wit.

The tapestries also tend to utilize different colors than the frescoes, favoring the blues and

greens that typify other Parisian tapestries of this period. Comparing the colors with those of the frescoes is possible only in a limited way, since the latter have undergone so many restorations. (Indeed, in an unusual reversal of the more common situation, the tapestries provide valuable documents of the original coloration of the frescoes.) Certain unusual combinations in the tapestries, such as the use of green shading in yellow sections, are wholly in tune with Rosso's sense of color as seen in his painted work and reflect combinations found in Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel—an interesting coincidence given the prevalence of Michelangelesque figural types in the gallery at Fontainebleau.<sup>13</sup>

Seeking to account for the divergence between the frescoed and stuccoed model and the tapestry designs, Pressouyre suggested that the deviations were conceived and executed by the painter Claude Badouin, one of Rosso's collaborators in the decoration of the gallery, who received payment for the cartoons.<sup>14</sup> Yet materials for the tapestries had already been purchased before Rosso's death, implying that the conception for the tapestries, even the *modelli*, complete with a determination of colors, may already have been finished. If this was the case, then it is possible that the tapestries were produced after designs by Rosso himself: a Rosso drawing at Christ Church, Oxford (1137), suggests that he had experience as a tapestry designer.<sup>15</sup> Badouin's job would then have been that of expanding the *modelli* into full-scale cartoons.

Payments for the preparation of cartoons for this series were made exclusively to Badouin: "To the said Badouin, painter, for having made cartoons on large paper following certain pictures in the large gallery of the said location [Fontainebleau] to serve as cartoons for the said tapestry at the rate of 20 l. per month."<sup>16</sup> But it is also possible that he was assisted in

this work by Luca Penni, Charles Carmoy, Francesco Caccianemici, and Giovanni Battista Bagnacavallo, whose names appear in adjacent and possibly related citations in the accounts for the French royal household.<sup>17</sup>

#### Workshop and Date

The weaving is generally dated between 1540 and 1547. The earliest related document is a payment to the Paris silk merchant Jehan Dannes on February 16, 1540, for silk and silver- and gilt-metal thread "for the tapestries that the king was having made at Fontainebleau after the paintings and stuccoes in the great gallery."<sup>18</sup> This document, which confirms that the tapestries were woven at Fontainebleau and at the behest of the king, also gives the cost of the materials. The Vienna set is the only certain product of that workshop.

The royal account books published by Laborde in 1877 and 1880 name the weavers active at Fontainebleau. Aside from the head weaver, Jean le Bries, "tapissier de haute lisse," "for having made the said high-quality/high-loom [?] tapestries following the designs and works of stucco and painting in the Grand Gallery of the said castle of Fontainebleau at a rate of 12 l. per month," an additional thirteen weavers are listed: Jean Desbouts, Pierre Philbert, Pasquier Mailly, Jean Texier, Pierre Blassay, Pierre le Bries, Jean Marchay, Nicolas Eustace, Nicolas Gaillard, Louis de Rocher, and Claude de Pelletier, each described as "tapissier" or "tapissier de haulte lisse," as well as Salomon and Pierre Herbainnes, described as "maistres tapissiers."<sup>19</sup> Documentation indicates that some of these weavers may also have been active in Paris during the period that they were working at Fontainebleau.<sup>20</sup> Cox-Rearick holds that a last payment to Pierre le Bries on July 30, 1547, in which he is identified as "tapissier ordinaire







du Roi, demeurant à Fontainebleau" (tapissier in ordinary to the king, living at Fontainebleau), documents the end of the project.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Patron and Provenance*

Among the unresolved questions relating to the Fontainebleau set is that of provenance. It cannot be settled on the basis of inventory entries, since the earliest surviving complete inventory of the Habsburg tapestry collection dates from 1882. However, there is an earlier document that mentions "six tapestries from Francis I." This record from the chief steward's office is dated August 13, 1690, and provides the first sure proof of their presence in the imperial collection, though an earlier entry from 1688, containing the mention of "six French pieces," may also refer to the Fontainebleau set.<sup>22</sup> How the tapestries came to Vienna is still unknown.

The fact that the first payment for the weaving of the set is documented shortly after Emperor Charles V's visit to Fontainebleau in December 1539 led Jestaz to suggest that the tapestries were intended as a gift from the French king to the Holy Roman Emperor. In his view the emperor was so impressed by the splendid decor of the gallery that Francis I commissioned tapestry "copies" for him. These could then have been presented to Charles by his sister Eleanor, the French king's consort, when she visited Brussels in October 1544.<sup>23</sup> Jestaz was led to these conclusions by the absence of the series from the Paris Garde-Meuble inventory of 1551, suggesting the tapestries' removal from the royal household before that date. As archival support for a connection between the Fontainebleau set and Charles V, Jestaz cited the documents from the chief steward's office in Vienna of 1688 and 1690 that refer to the restoration of "six tapestries of Charles V" and the "six tapestries from Francis I." Jestaz suggested that this was one and the same set and that the description of the set as "of Charles V" provided circumstantial evidence for the putative gift to Charles. In fact, as Gruber has demonstrated, the proposal put forward by Jestaz is undermined by several arguments.<sup>24</sup> First, one of the documents tells us that the Netherlandish master Jean Trechet was at that time still occupied with repair work on tapestries of Charles V, possibly a set of coats of arms (six such works are preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; see fig. 111), and he is commended for his fine work on the

restoration of the set from Francis I, which was probably already finished. (It was possibly during this restoration that Trechet partly altered the insignia of the French monarch in the Fontainebleau series. The F became an I for Joseph I, whose coronation as king of the Romans was imminent. The salamander lost its crown, and the French fleur-de-lis became a pattern of smaller flowers.)<sup>25</sup>

A second objection to Jestaz's argument is provided by another document. Dated July 30, 1547, shortly after the death of Francis I, this tells us that weavers were still receiving payments for their work at Fontainebleau as late as 1547. Although it is possible that these payments were related to completed projects, it nonetheless seems unlikely that the tapestries had been presented to Charles as a gift three years earlier, in 1544.<sup>26</sup> A further argument against Jestaz's theory is the content of the set. What use would Charles V have had for artworks of such monumental and imposing format glorifying his military opponent Francis I?

A more plausible explanation of the appearance of the set in Vienna in the late seventeenth century was proposed by Dimier. He suggested that, given the friendly relations between the French court under Charles IX and the Habsburg ruling family, especially Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria (brother of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II), the set came to Vienna in 1570 on the occasion of the marriage of the French king to Archduchess Elizabeth, daughter of Maximilian II. At that time Charles also presented Archduke Ferdinand with the famous salt-cellar made by Benvenuto Cellini for Francis I, among other gifts, in gratitude for his help in negotiating the marriage. Surviving reports of these gifts from the Venetian ambassadors and agents of the Fuggers fail to mention any tapestries, however, so there was probably no official presentation of the tapestries along with the other treasures.

There is still disagreement as to why the tapestries were commissioned and what their intended purpose could have been. Because their program focuses so exclusively on the French king, they would not have been ideal gifts for some friendly monarch. One, then, has to wonder why Francis I should have wished to "copy" for himself the decor that he could admire in the original whenever he wished. But this may be precisely the point: from the begin-

ning the decoration of the Galerie François I met with universal admiration, and since tapestries were portable furnishings, the king may have commissioned the series so he could surround himself, wherever he was, with works that were of extraordinary artistry and that depicted him so unmistakably as an absolute monarch.<sup>27</sup> The tapestries could also reflect the contemporary taste for sophisticated visual plays. Trompe l'oeil decoration—mixing faux painted architecture with real, and illusionistic, painted tapestries with actual ones—had been popularized by the Raphael school during the early sixteenth century in their elaborate interiors for the Vatican Palace and elsewhere. Francis's set may have been inspired by these influential models.

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1. Pillich 1959, pp. 466ff.
2. McAllister Johnson 1972, p. 163.
3. Dan 1642, p. 89.
4. Göbel 1928, p. 41.
5. Panofsky and Panofsky 1958, p. 127.
6. Göbel 1928, p. 41.
7. For an illustration, see Panofsky and Panofsky 1958, p. 129.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
9. De Tervarent 1952; Chastel 1968; Béguin 1972; McAllister Johnson 1972; Carroll in Washington 1987.
10. Adhémar 1954.
11. Chastel 1968; McAllister Johnson 1972, p. 162.
12. For the engravings, see Paris 1972, pp. 112–20.
13. G. Gruber 1995, p. 26.
14. Pressouyre 1972, p. 111.
15. Carroll in Washington 1987, pp. 208–12, 248; G. Gruber 1995, p. 28.
16. "Au dit Badouin, peintre pour avoir vacqué à faire des patrons sur grand papier suivant certains tableaux estans en la grande galerie du dit lieu pour servir de patrons à la dite tapisserie à raison de 20 l. par mois"; *Comptes des Bâtimens*, quoted from Laborde 1877–80, vol. 1, p. 204.
17. Cox-Rearick 1995, pp. 384–85.
18. "[P]our servir à faire les tapisseries que le Roy nostre Sire fait faire aud. Fontainebleau sur la forme et ordonnance des ouvrages de peinture et steuf [sic] estans en la grant galerie de son chasteau dud. Fontainebleau"; Grodecki 1978, p. 215.
19. "[P]our avoir vacqué esdits ouvrages de tapisserie de haute lisse suivant les patrons et ouvrages de stucs et peintures de la Grande Galerie dudit chasteau de Fontainebleau à raison de 12 l. 10 s. par mois"; Laborde 1877–80, vol. 1, pp. 205–6.
20. Gruber 1993, p. 6.
21. Cox-Rearick 1995, p. 385.
22. Pillich 1959, p. 466.
23. Jestaz 1973, pp. 53f.
24. G. Gruber 1995, p. 23.
25. Baldass 1920, nos. 155–60.
26. Guiffrey 1915b, p. 259.
27. Carroll in Washington 1987, p. 225; G. Gruber 1993, pp. 37ff.



## *Saint Mamas at the Tribunal of the Governor of Cappadocia*

From an eight-piece set of the *Story of Saint Mamas*  
Design by Jean Cousin the elder, 1543  
Woven in the workshop of either Pierre Blasse or  
Jacques Langlois, Paris, ca. 1544–45  
Wool and silk  
435 x 475 cm (14 ft. 3¼ in. x 15 ft. 7 in.)  
6 warps per cm  
Département des Objets d'Art, Musée du Louvre, Paris;  
Gift of Maurice Lereuil (OA 9327)

PROVENANCE: July 14, 1543, commissioned by Claude de Longwy, cardinal of Givry, from designs by Jean Cousin the elder; 1639, seen by Richelieu in Langres; 1659, mentioned in a poem by Claude Perry; 1709, listed in an inventory of Langres Cathedral; before 1789, hanging in the choir of the cathedral; before 1926, Lereuil collection, Chaumont; 1940, given by Marie Louis Maurice Lereuil to the Louvre.

REFERENCES: Roy 1914, pp. 7–8; Marcel 1926, pp. 342, 351; Paris 1965a, pp. 12–13; Paris 1972, pp. 345–47 (with bibliog.); Ross 1978; Brugerolles in Paris, Cambridge, and New York 1994, pp. 158–62; Zerner 1996, pp. 254–58; Bertrand 1997.

CONDITION: Generally good. Spot repairs and overall fading with loss of pink and red tones especially. Many of the areas that were originally dark brown have been replaced with a wool that has faded to a lighter tone. New guard border.

Saint Mamas was a young Cappadocian shepherd who converted to Christianity and was persecuted by the emperor Aurelian in A.D. 273–74. From the eighth century, the French town of Langres, which had received a relic of Saint Mamas (a bone from his neck), was a cult center for the martyr. Hagiographers, in telling his story, supplemented historical facts with legend: first he was arrested, delivered by an angel, and transported to a nearby mountain where wild animals came to hear him preach; then he was arrested a second time, put to death, and buried near Caesarea, where the number of miracles performed at his tomb contributed to his appeal. It is this history that is illustrated in the tapestries that Claude de Longwy, cardinal of Givry and bishop of Langres, offered to the cathedral of Langres. Three pieces of the original eight are extant, along with two preparatory drawings. The three tapestries are rare surviving examples of the production of Parisian

weavers in the sixteenth century and are exceptional in that the artist and the workshop are well documented. In addition, these works, of incontestable authenticity, constitute the principal oeuvre of Jean Cousin the elder, and on them depend almost all the attributions of paintings, sculptures, stained glass, tapestries, and embroideries that have been made to him.

### *Description and Iconography*

The Louvre tapestry depicts events associated with Saint Mamas's second, and final, arrest, according to the version of his life recorded by Simeon Metaphrastes in a collection of saints' lives compiled in the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> At the upper left, Mamas entertains two soldiers who have been sent to arrest him but have not yet recognized him. They are eating cheese the saint has made from the milk of the animals to which he had ministered and preached. The female animals appear around Mamas's rustic abode, ready to be milked, to the consternation of the soldiers, to whom Mamas then reveals his true identity. Below, we see the soldiers returning the way they had come after the saint has told them that he will surrender himself voluntarily. As related in the *Breviarium Lingonense* (a breviary devoted to Saint Mamas, which was printed in Paris in 1536), "a short time later, Mamas followed those waiting for him at the city gate into the governor's presence."<sup>2</sup>

This surrender is the principal subject of the tapestry's foreground. We see Mamas, accompanied by a lion, standing before Alexander, the prefect of Cappadocia, who appears on the steps of a classical portico, above which is a sculpture of Jupiter. The saint wears a tunic gathered at the waist, with a mantle passing over one shoulder and tied in front. This costume is found again in depictions of the saint in other tapestries and in the figure of the angel in the preparatory drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The lion is similar to one in an engraving by Marco Dente depicting Strength, which was based on a Raphael-school model.<sup>3</sup>

According to legend and the Langres breviary, Alexander questioned Mamas as to his ability to charm animals and speak with them.

Mamas declared: "I serve Jesus Christ, who hates all magicians and evildoers and detests sacrilege."<sup>4</sup> Alexander's response was to condemn Mamas to death. This brutal event can be seen taking place in the middle distance, within the confines of a building whose facade takes the form of a classical triumphal arch. Tied to a column, the saint is being tortured by two figures, while a seated, crowned figure, probably the emperor Aurelian, looks on. Above, an angel provides Mamas with divine consolation.

The scenes of the life of the saint are surrounded by deep, richly decorated borders depicting various fruits, vegetables, cartouches, strapwork, and, at each corner, a grotesque mask. On the lower border, an inscription explains the various episodes illustrated in the main field: SAINCT MAMMES APRES AVOYR FESTIEE ET SE ESTRE DECLARE A CEVLX QVI LE VOVLOYENT PRANDRE AYANS DIFFERE POVR LA PEVR QVILS HEVRENT DES BESTES, DE LVY MESMES AVEC VNG LYON SEN ALLA PRESENTER AV DVC ALEXANDRE QVI LE FEIST MARTIRISER (Saint Mamas, after having celebrated and revealed himself to those who wished to eat, but who had deferred from their fear of the animals, leaves with a lion to present himself to Duke Alexander who has him martyred). In the middle of the upper border are represented the arms of the patron, *d'azur à la bande d'or* (a band of gold on a blue field).

The appearance and content of the rest of the set can be reconstructed on the basis of a poem by Claude Perry, written in 1659, and the Langres Cathedral inventory of 1709.<sup>5</sup> From these, we know that one of the lost tapestries depicted the donor of the set, Claude de Longwy, and another the apotheosis of the saint. Each of the surviving pieces depicts a principal event in the life of the saint, with subsidiary scenes represented in the background. Two pieces are extant at Langres Cathedral. The first shows Mamas preaching to the animals, and the second, another of the saint's ordeals—his being burned in a furnace as the emperor looks on, with prisoners escaping in the background as a result of the saint's prayers. The appearance of another, lost, scene is probably recorded by a drawing attributed to Cousin that depicts one of

the saint's earlier ordeals: he was thrown into the sea with a heavy weight tied around his neck but was saved by an angel (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris).<sup>6</sup> A drawing that came to light only very recently appears to show yet another scene, one from the infancy of Mamas (Metropolitan Museum, New York).<sup>7</sup>

In including a portrait of himself in the series, Longwy was following a well-established tradition. For example, the *Story of Saint Genevieve* set that Cousin had designed for the confraternity of Sainte-Geneviève du Mont included a portrait of Guillaume Le Duc, abbot of Sainte-Geneviève from 1517 to 1534. Another analogy was the set of tapestries that Guillaume Le Duc's successor donated to the same institution in 1544, which also included a portrait of the patron, known from a drawing of the antiquarian Roger de Gaignières.<sup>8</sup>

#### *The Patron and the Contracts*

Claude de Longwy, cardinal of Givry, who was close to Francis I and one of the principal representatives of the Counter Reformation in France, was a great *amateur* of art. During his period as bishop (1529–61), he presented the cathedral of Langres not only with the *Story of Saint Mamas* tapestries but also with a rood screen, now lost. Built between 1550 and 1555, this work was, according to the Jesuit Jacques Viguier, intended to be one of the most beautiful in France. Givry also had his tomb built in the cathedral choir. Now lost, but known through an anonymous seventeenth-century drawing, it was an important monument with an effigy of the cardinal in prayer, attributed to Domenico del Barbieri. For the chapel of the château of Champigny-sur-Veude, a property of the Bourbons (Givry's niece, Jacqueline de Longwy, had married Louis II Bourbon, first duke of Montpensier), the cardinal gave stained-glass windows, of which the magnificent Crucifixion in the central window of the choir is attributed to Cousin. Other projects supported by Givry include a chapel in Langres Cathedral (today the chapel of the font), commissioned by the administrator of the diocese of Langres, Jean IV d'Amoncourt. All the works executed under the patronage of Givry and his entourage presented a classicizing tendency, reflecting the influence of taste at the French court.<sup>9</sup>

Two contracts discovered by Roy indicate that Givry ordered the *Mamas* designs from

Cousin on July 14, 1543, for the substantial sum of 200 *écus d'or*, and that he commissioned the tapestries from Blasse and Langlois on January 29, 1544, for 640 *écus d'or*. The first contract stipulated that the painter had to furnish eight large designs with "colors completed and ready to serve as cartoons," as well as the design for "deep borders elaborated with fruit and compartments." The first contract also specified that Cousin should execute each of these cartoons on the basis of a study, a "small project on paper," which would be presented to the patron for approval.<sup>10</sup> This project was to indicate the relationship between the borders and the main scene of the tapestry and the placement of the inscription and coat of arms of the cardinal. This stipulation subsequently underwent an important modification: according to the contract, Givry's escutcheon was to be reproduced three times on each tapestry, but in fact it appeared only once in the upper border of each completed tapestry.

To produce the cartoons, Cousin was required to follow scrupulously the instructions received from the cardinal on the form of "the story and description of the said Saint Mamas which had been presented to him."<sup>11</sup> Seven cartoons illustrated the most famous episodes in the life of the martyr, and the eighth showed the patron, the cardinal of Givry, in prayer. The "story and description" of the saint furnished to the painter has never been found. It must have been quite detailed, as the life of Mamas was not well known and was not included in the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine. Indeed, the subject is very rare. In his study of the set, the only antecedents that Ross was able to identify were a thirteenth-century window in Auxerre Cathedral and a set of five fifteenth-century panels attributed to the Venetian artist Francesco dei Franceschi, neither of which has anything in common with the tapestries.<sup>12</sup>

The text sent to the painter probably presented a program specifically worded to guide him, akin to that provided for the Troyes *Story of Saint Urban and Saint Cecilia* set. In addition, the cardinal—who personally signed the contract, which was not always the case for a personage of high rank—was to confer with the painter to regulate any details not mentioned in the agreement.<sup>13</sup> Ross recognized that the scene illustrated in the Paris preparatory drawing *Saint Mamas Cast into the Sea* was described in the

tenth-century account of Simeon Metaphrastes. Nevertheless, that text omits certain distinctive elements, such as the details of the torture as depicted in this scene; Simeon reports only that Mamas was whipped. A more recent source would have been the *Catalogus sanctorum*, edited by Petrus de Natalibus in 1508, but this version does not include a crucial incident in one of the extant Langres tapestries, in which an angel gives the saint a wand that will make the book of Gospels appear when he strikes the earth with it.<sup>14</sup> Another possible source, noted by Marcel, is a Langres breviary published in 1536 (Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Paris, B.B. 954), which presents the life of the saint in nine readings.<sup>15</sup> This version of Mamas's martyrdom corresponds closely to the scenes depicted in the tapestries, including the angel presenting Mamas with a wand and the casting of the saint into the sea. However, it does not include the detail of the lion accompanying Mamas when he presents himself to Alexander. It therefore seems likely that the program provided to Cousin melded local and historical texts, perhaps interpreted specifically for the tapestries.

In the second contract, the one the cardinal of Givry made with the weavers, he specified that they should take great care with the cartoons and return them to him as soon as the work was completed. Ordinarily, the cartoons would remain with the workshop. The terms of this contract lead one to think that Givry considered the cartoons to be independent works of art.

#### *Artist and Design*

The works best documented and most certainly attributed to Jean Cousin the elder (ca. 1500–ca. 1560) are few. They include only one painting, *Eve before Pandora* (before 1550; Louvre, Paris); two engravings signed with his name, an *Entombment of Christ* and an *Annunciation* (ca. 1544); and illustrations for his book *Livre de perspective* (1560), for which the engravings were entrusted to specialists. The attribution of the tapestry cartoons, now lost, to Cousin rests on archival documents, and, as such, the extant tapestries provide an important basis of comparison for the identification of his other works (although it is important to remember that the tapestries reflect his designs at one remove, via the interpretation of the weavers). As Zerner has noted, Cousin's designs integrated the novelties





of Italian pictorial language (idealized figures, classical architectural vocabulary, and citations from Raphaelesque engravings) with much more traditional elements, particularly in the representation of visible space, which is reminiscent of the flat compositional style of the

tapestries made for Reims Cathedral in the late 1520s, the *Life of the Virgin* (see fig. 116) and the *Story of Saint Remi*.<sup>16</sup>

In developing his designs, Cousin adopted a multiple narrative structure traditional to tapestries—and revived during the late 1520s and

early 1530s by Netherlandish tapestry designers such as Bernaert van Orley and Pieter Coecke van Aelst—in which a major event in the life of the protagonist is juxtaposed in each tapestry with several secondary episodes. Thus *Saint Mamas at the Tribunal of the Governor of*

*Cappadocia* contains four subsidiary scenes, three preceding and one following the main subject in the chronology of the martyr's life. A sense of narrative continuity from one panel to the next is achieved by anticipating a forthcoming event in a subsidiary scene: thus, the soldiers sent by the emperor to arrest the saint appear both in the Louvre tapestry and in *Saint Mamas Preaching to the Animals* (Langres Cathedral); the angel carrying a wand to the saint in prayer is represented both in this latter tapestry and in the drawing *Saint Mamas Cast into the Sea*.<sup>17</sup> Another traditional design device that Cousin adopted was the use of foliage and architecture to divide one scene from another.

If Cousin used traditional narrative and compositional devices for the structure of his tapestry designs, these elements are integrated with others that demonstrate his awareness of Italian art and the work of contemporary artists at Fontainebleau. His interest in the antique is reflected in the idealized figures and the architectural components, both intact and ruined, that frame the principal and subsidiary scenes. As Ross first noted, the main elements of the arch through which we can see Mamas being tortured are taken from an illustration of a Corinthian triumphal arch in Sebastiano Serlio's fourth book on the classical orders, as are the Corinthian capitals on the portico in the foreground.<sup>18</sup> Cousin, insisting on the importance of antique ornament, has treated all the elements of the decoration—capitals, column bases, and sculptures—in a golden bronze color.

Cousin's awareness of contemporary work at Fontainebleau manifests itself both in the contrasting scale of the figures within the scenes and, most obviously, in the borders, where the ebullient blend of strapwork, fruit, vegetables, and grotesque masks reflects the decoration of the Galerie François I and the engravings that that work inspired. Ross notes the similarity between the borders of the *Mamas* tapestries and the frame of Jean Mignon's print *Temptation of Eve* and their even closer correspondence with the deep borders that frame the vignettes in *De faictz et gestes insignes des Romains*, a translation of

Dio Cassius published in Paris in 1542, the year before Cousin began to design the tapestries.<sup>19</sup>

#### Workshop

The cardinal disbursed a large sum for the *modelli* and still more for the weaving. The second contract specified that the hangings should be of the same quality as the tapestry of "fantasies et devises" that Pierre Blasse had produced for the *maître de requêtes* N. du Mortier. The tapestries were also required to present not only a coloration dominated by blue green and yellow (as the tapestries reveal now) but a great variety and liveliness of tones: deep green, blue green, and water green, lemon yellow, and pale rose, in particular (still visible on the reverse).

The tapestries were woven between February 1544 and 1545 in the Paris workshops of Pierre Blasse (whether I or II is unclear) and Jacques Langlois. None of the tapestries carries a weaver's mark; there was no such requirement in Paris at this date, so it is not possible to say in which atelier this particular piece was woven. Blasse and Langlois were both among the more successful Parisian weavers, and the character, if not the full scope, of their activity is suggested by a number of documents. As noted, Pierre Blasse was engaged in weaving a set of "fantasies et devises" for du Mortier at the time he received the Givry commission, and he may have been one and the same with a Pierre Blacé who was among the weavers at Fontainebleau during the 1540s. Alternatively, this may have been his son of the same name. The inventory of the senior Blasse's possessions taken after his death in June 1550 recorded two looms in his residence, 3 and 4 meters long, respectively. Subsequently, his son was to collaborate with Jehan Desbouts, tapissier to the duchess of Étampes, in 1550 on a set of grotesques for the duchess's brother Charles de Pisseleu, bishop of Condom; with Guy and Girard Laurens on tapestry horse covers for the cardinal of Châtillon in 1559; and with Joachim Courtoys on a set of "l'Histoire du lyon" in 1561. He was also responsible for subcontracting work to other weavers: for example, in 1558 he arranged for a piece of the *Story of Saint James*,

commissioned by the sieur de Longueil, to be woven by Remy Martin, and in the following year he engaged a weaver for another tapestry, for the church of Saint-Jean-en-Grève.<sup>20</sup>

Jacques Langlois, who lived in the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, was responsible for producing a four-piece set of religious tapestries for Jérôme Burgensis, abbé commendataire of Saint-Pierre-aux-Monts de Châlons, in 1554 and for weaving, in 1556, two of six pieces of the *Life of Christ* set that the cardinal of Bourbon had commissioned for the abbey of Saint-Denis. This work was subcontracted from Pierre de Larris, who had received the original commission in 1553. Like many other Parisian weavers, Langlois is also documented as having produced tapestry horse covers.<sup>21</sup>

PASCAL-FRANÇOIS BERTRAND AND  
THOMAS CAMPBELL

1. Migne 1864, pp. 566–74; Ross 1978, p. 28.
2. "At paululum prestolantes ad civitatis portas consecutus Mammes una cum eis ad presidem ingressus est"; Marcel 1926, p. 487 (quoting from the original, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS B.B. 954).
3. Ross 1978, pp. 33–34.
4. "Servus sum Jesu Christi qui magos omnes ac maleficos odit et ut sacrilegos detestatur"; Marcel 1926, p. 487.
5. Roy 1914, pp. 1–2.
6. Bertrand 1997, pp. 47–48.
7. Stein 2001; Stein 2002.
8. Bertrand 1997, p. 47.
9. Zerner 1996, pp. 209–85.
10. "[C]ouleurs achevées et prestes pour servir de patrons"; "bordeures larges enrichies de fruitz et compartimens"; "petit proget en pappier"; Roy 1929, p. 50. It is certainly this sketch that was executed on paper, and not the cartoons as Zerner has indicated (1996, p. 255). Nothing in the contract designates the support medium for the cartoons. It is unclear whether they were painted on paper or canvas (Cousin used canvas for the *Saint Geneviève* cartoons).
11. "[L]a légende et description dudit saint Mammès qui lui a été baillée"; Roy 1929, p. 50.
12. Ross 1978, p. 31.
13. Zerner 1996, p. 254.
14. Ross 1978, pp. 28–29 (with further bibliog.).
15. Marcel 1926, pp. 343, 486–88.
16. Zerner 1996, pp. 255–56; Bertrand 2002.
17. Bertrand 1997, pp. 48–49.
18. Ross 1978, pp. 31–32.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.
20. Bertrand 1997, pp. 45–46.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 45.











## Tapestry Production in Italy, 1520-60

A market for Netherlandish tapestries was already well established in Italy during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and the taste for these works encouraged the development of a number of small Italian manufactories in the same years (see pp. 85–101). Among the foremost patrons of the Netherlandish industry from the 1510s to the 1530s were Popes Leo X and Clement VII, and Andrea I Doria, whose commissions stimulated radical development in the style of tapestry design in the Low Countries during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Yet while demand for products from the Low Countries continued to grow, relatively little weaving seems to have been carried out in Italy in this period. As Forti Grazzini has suggested, this dearth of activity may, in part, have resulted from a decline in the demand for the decorative and moderate-quality tapestries that local manufactories were able to supply.<sup>1</sup> More and more Italian patrons wanted the high-quality, figurative tapestries they could obtain at reasonable cost and with increasing ease from the Low Countries because the industry there had grown and consolidated between 1490 and 1525. If this situation constituted a major disincentive to the foundation of sizable workshops in Italy between 1490 and the 1520s, a renewed spirit of entrepreneurship and experimentation took hold during the second third of the century, when new manufactories were established at Ferrara, Mantua, Genoa, and Florence. A variety of factors appear to have inspired this development: the splendid example being set by such northern European patrons as Charles V, Henry VIII, and Francis I; the success of the commissions placed in Brussels by Leo X and Clement VII; the hope that Italian products might be cheaper than Netherlandish imports; a period of relative stability and harmonious coexistence among the various Italian states; and, at least in the notable instance of Florence, the vision of a native industry that might eventually compete with the workshops of Brussels. Like the provincial French workshops (see pp. 459–69), most Italian ateliers were short-lived. However, their distance from the main Netherlandish centers and their use of designs made by artists who worked in the mainstream of Italian style, rather than in the Netherlandish tradition, guaranteed that their products were among the most innovative of the period. Unfortunately,

many Italian tapestries incorporated large areas of wool dyed dark brown and black to re-create the chiaroscuro effects of the Italian designs, dyes which incorporated metallic oxides that, over the passage of time, were especially destructive to the wools and silks to which they were applied, making the tapestries even more prone to deterioration than their Netherlandish counterparts. For this reason it has been possible to include only a small number of Italian examples in the present exhibition. The aim of this section is to provide a short overview of the main centers of Italian tapestry making between 1520 and 1560, the weavers and artists involved, and the character of the products.<sup>2</sup>

### FERRARA

Although a number of small tapestry ateliers operated in Ferrara during the fifteenth century, production appears to have languished under Alfonso I d'Este (1476–1534), who reigned as third duke of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio from 1505. Alfonso's interests as a patron were essentially focused on the brilliant painters of the day—Bellini, Raphael, Titian, Dosso Dossi and Fra Bartolommeo—all of whom provided decorations and paintings for his principal residence in Ferrara. Nonetheless, sumptuous tapestries continued to decorate the Este court on all important festivities, and an inventory of 1531 demonstrates that many of the grandest sets acquired under Alfonso's predecessors Borso and Ercole I were still in the collection at that date.<sup>3</sup> With the accession of Alfonso's son Ercole II (1508–1559), who was fourth duke between 1534 and 1559, a new era of support for tapestry making was inaugurated. In 1536 Ercole reestablished a court manufactory, which flourished for about twenty-five years under his enthusiastic patronage. This workshop executed tapestries of considerable iconographic and artistic interest from designs by local artists, among them the brothers Dosso and Battista Dossi, Girolamo da Carpi, and Leonardo da Brescia as well as artists from farther afield such as Giulio Romano and Giovanni Antonio Pordenone. Only a small part of this production has survived, but the handful of extant pieces, combined with contemporary documentation, provide a glimpse of the quality and achievement of this notable although short-lived enterprise. The principal study of this manufactory has

been written by Forti Grazzini, and the following text is greatly indebted to his detailed work.<sup>4</sup>

Scion of one of the most remarkable dynasties of Renaissance patrons, Ercole was a sophisticated and cultured connoisseur of literature and the arts whose tastes, following those of his aunt Isabella d'Este, tended to the erudite and allegorical. He was fluent in Latin and, like Federico II Gonzaga, an aficionado of antique and contemporary sculptures and medals. And like many of the leading patrons of the day, he had a keen sense of how crucial the arts, particularly tapestry, were in creating the splendor and magnificence requisite for his station and court. In part his taste may have derived from the example of his forebears. He may have also been influenced by the taste of his wife, Renée, daughter of the French king Louis XII, to whom he was married in 1528. Raised at the French court after her father's death, Renée presumably attended the famous Field of the Cloth of Gold meeting of 1520 between Francis I and Henry VIII, where tapestries played a central role. Moreover, the date of Renée's marriage to Ercole coincided with a period in which Francis was commissioning ambitious sets of tapestries for the French court. Indeed, Francis's wedding gift to Renée was a nine piece set of tapestries with scenes based on François Dassi's *La prison d'amour* (translated from Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*, Seville, 1492).<sup>5</sup>

Ercole's workshop was established under the direction of two Netherlandish weavers, Jan (Giovanni, Hans; fl. 1517–62) and Nicolas (Nicola; fl. 1517–62) Karcher, who had been active since at least 1517 at Ferrara, where they were engaged in repairing the collection.<sup>6</sup> Whether they also wove new tapestries during the 1510s and 1520s is unclear, but the facility with which they took up this task under Ercole's patronage suggests that they may well have done so, albeit on an independent basis. Jan remained in Ferrara until his death in 1562, but Nicolas had a much more varied career, playing the central role in establishing and directing workshops in Mantua from 1539 to 1544, in Florence from 1545 to 1554, and in Mantua again between 1554 and 1562.<sup>7</sup> There is no extant documentation regarding the terms under which Ercole established the Ferrara workshop in 1536, but in that year Nicolas appears to have traveled to the Netherlands, recruiting eight weavers there. Among them, it is assumed, was Jan (Giovanni) Rost (fl. 1535–64), a Brussels weaver who must already have been an independent master, as his emblem—a roast on a spit—appears, along with the Brussels mark, on a *Hunt* tapestry (Musée Marmottan, Paris). Rost and his mother had been persecuted for heresy in 1534 in Brussels, and this was presumably a factor in his decision to depart for Ferrara.<sup>8</sup> He remained in Ferrara until August 1545, when he moved to Florence to found a workshop for

Cosimo de' Medici, which would compete with Karcher's establishment there.

From 1537 another workshop was also active in Ferrara under the direction of Gerardo Slot, although its products seem to have been confined to modest decorative furnishing tapestries.

According to a report sent to Federico Gonzaga by Gerolamo Sestola in 1536, Ercole's aim in establishing the Karcher-Rost workshop was to provide tapestries for new apartments he was constructing, and the provision of tapestries for his personal aggrandizement was to remain the principal aim of the Ferrarese manufactory throughout the patron's life.<sup>9</sup> Generally speaking, there is a clear distinction to be made in the designs produced during the following twenty-five years between sets whose iconography was overtly celebratory of Ercole, usually by way of metaphor and literary allegory, intended for display in the more public rooms of his palace, and sets that were of a more decorative and fantastical character, intended for use in private rooms.

The first designs carried out in Ercole's manufactory, of unknown subject, were prepared in late 1536 and in 1537 by Dosso (ca. 1486–1542?) and Battista Dossi (ca. 1490/95–1548), aided in the execution of the cartoons by an assistant.<sup>10</sup> The Dossi were the leading painters at Ercole's court, where they were required to turn their hands to a wide spectrum of tasks ranging from painting altar panels to designing tableware and temporary decorations.<sup>11</sup> The following year another set of cartoons was put on the loom, in this instance from designs by the eminent Mantuan artist Giulio Romano.<sup>12</sup> In 1535, Giulio had been in Ferrara advising on the reconstruction of a palace that had burned down, and in April 1535 Ercole wrote to Federico Gonzaga, asking if the artist might return to discuss "certi pensieri" (certain ideas). As Forti Grazzini has noted, this request must have been directly related to the new tapestry manufactory: Giulio's renown and experience in designing the *Scipio* tapestries for Francis I (and perhaps other tapestries for Federico) making him an obvious tool for Ercole's ambitions. In any event, between October 1537 and spring 1538 Giulio provided designs from Mantua that were woven over the course of the next two years. Ercole also corresponded with Ercole Gonzaga (Federico's brother), requesting the services of an artist named Luca Fiammingho or d'Olanda, who had worked under Giulio in the Appartamento di Troia in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua in 1536–37. It seems likely, therefore, that the cartoons for this set were executed in part by Luca.<sup>13</sup>

Although the tapestries are lost, they can be identified as a four-piece set called the *Gigantomachia*, woven in wool, silk, and gold, with a height of 4.69 meters and a combined length of just under 16 meters. Depicting the defeat of the Giants by the Gods, the





Fig. 208. *The Battle between the Gods and the Giants*. Modello for the tapestry from the *Gigantomachia* by Giulio Romano, ca. 1538. Pen and wash with white highlights, 41.8 x 43.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 209. *The Triumph of the Gods*. Modello for the tapestry from the *Gigantomachia* by Giulio Romano, ca. 1538. Pen and wash with white highlights, 42.8 x 43.8 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

group provided a metaphorical celebration of the patron. Forti Grazzini has determined that two drawings in the Louvre are *modelli* for the set, one representing the *Battle between the Gods and the Giants*, the other the *Triumph of the Gods* (figs. 208, 209). In the latter the young figure of the victor seated in the carriage, logically Jupiter, may have been intended to represent the duke, who was twenty-seven years old when he commissioned the tapestries, exalting him as a strong and wise hero, in the same way he was celebrated in contemporary court panegyric poems and treatises by Lilio Gregorio Giraldi and Giambattista Cinzio Giraldi.<sup>14</sup> According to an eyewitness account written on the occasion of the visit of Pope Paul III to Ferrara in 1543, the tapestries displayed astonishing imagination and verisimilitude.

Following the successful initiation of his commission from Giulio, Ercole took steps to obtain designs from another famous contemporary artist, Giovanni Antonio Pordenone, whose poetic and mannered style of painting was winning him attention in Venice at the time. In response to approaches from the Ferrarese ambassador in Venice, late in 1538 Pordenone traveled to Ferrara, where he was received by the duke with “molte carazze” (much affection). This initiative was less fortunate than the first, for, as Vasari tells us, Pordenone died on January 14, 1539, only a few days after his arrival in Ferrara. But before he died, Pordenone had

prepared eight designs and started a ninth for a series on the *Odyssey*, which were seen and described by Carlo Ridolfi in the seventeenth century. The scenes depicted the *Lotus Eaters*, *Polyphemus*, *Aeolus and the Bag of Winds*, the *Lestrygonians*, the *Visit to the Underworld*, *Circe*, the *Sirens*, and *Scylla and Charybdis*. Again, the travails of the hero were probably intended as a metaphorical celebration of the patron.<sup>15</sup>

In the following year Jan Karcher’s workshop produced a series of *antiporte* from designs by Battista and Dosso Dossi, while Rost traveled to the Netherlands to purchase the wool required for the project. Dosso died about 1542, but Battista’s work with the manufactory continued unabated. During 1542 he provided designs for a five-piece set described in the documents as “Le Deità d’Ercole,” which was woven between summer 1542 and 1545. Records of payments to the artist and weavers and later inventory descriptions reveal that the subjects were the *Wedding of Hercules and Hebe*, the *Liberation of Hesione*, the *Bath of Hercules*, the *Sacrifice of Hercules* and *Hercules and the Hydra*, and *Minerva, Hercules and Apollo Repelling the Vices*.<sup>16</sup> The tapestries have not survived, but the cartoons, which are also lost, were displayed in the Este palace in Modena in the eighteenth century, when they were described by Girolamo Baruffaldi. Here too, the subjects were evidently chosen as metaphorical celebrations of the name and *impresa* of the patron, along

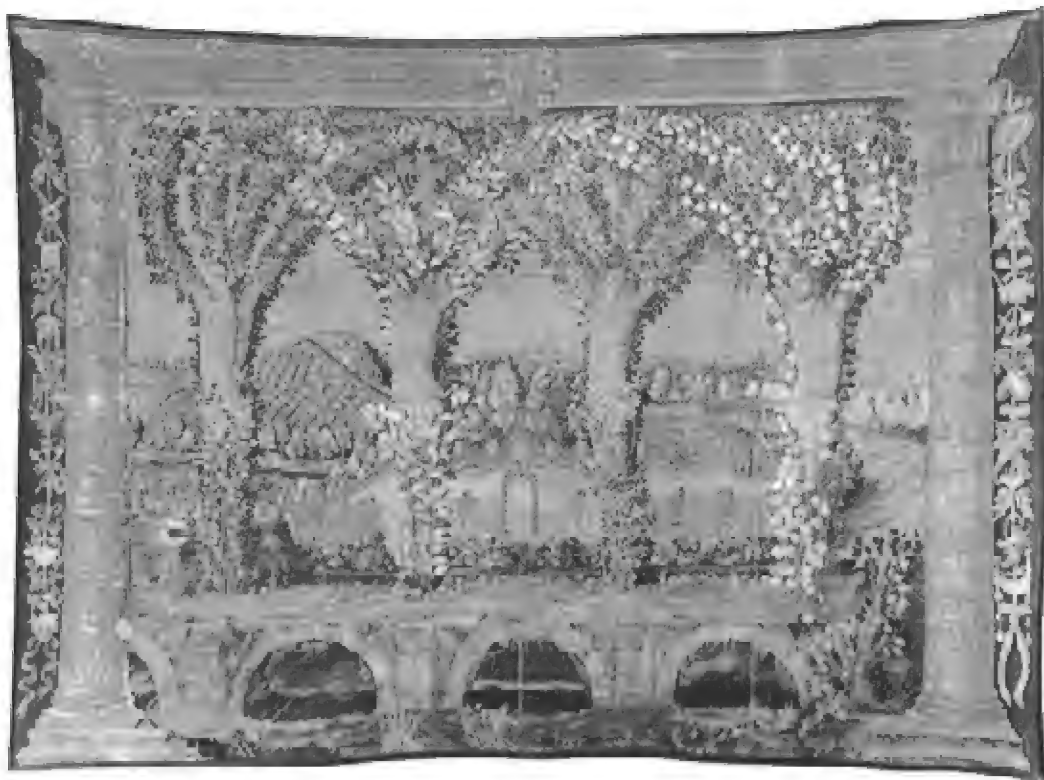


Fig. 210. *The Gardens from the Metamorphoses*. Tapestry designed by Battista Dossi and Camillo Filippi, woven in the workshop of Jan Karcher, Ferrara, ca. 1545. Wool and silk, 490 x 685 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris

the lines of panegyric court literature.<sup>17</sup> A drawing in the Louvre, identified by Forti Grazzini as a *modello* by Giulio for this series, indicates that the preliminary designs may have been provided by this master.<sup>18</sup>

The next tapestries produced by the Ferrara looms constituted a five-piece set woven in silk and wool recorded as the “*Trasfigurazioni degli dei*” in the Ferrara archives. According to contemporary descriptions, the group depicted landscapes with gods and goddesses metamorphosing into trees, plants, water, and animals, with each scene surrounded by a frame made up of a column and an entablature (see fig. 210). The designs were painted in 1544–45 by Battista Dossi, who executed the cartoons with the assistance of Camillo Filippi and Bernardino Bellone. Four of these tapestries have survived in part.<sup>19</sup> Two pieces now in the Louvre carry the inscriptions *FACTVM FERRARIAE MDXXXV* and *HER II DUX III*, while one carries Jan Karcher’s monogram, an H (for Hans) and a K surmounted by a cross. The inspiration for these compositions was the fresco cycle Dosso and Battista Dossi painted in 1529–30 for Francesco Maria I della Rovere, duke of Urbino, in the Sala delle Cariatidi, or delle Eliadi, of the Villa Imperiale in Pesaro, which was adapted and simplified for rendition in tapestry form. Gibbons has identified two of the landscapes depicted in the set as evocations of lost Este pleasure gardens, indicating that the series like the others from Ercole’s workshop, was a poetic celebration of the patron—these paradisiacal scenes providing a metaphor for the golden age that had flourished under his rule.<sup>20</sup>

Assessment of the original appearance of the tapestries is impeded by the extremely faded condition of the extant fragments. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the ungainly nature of some of the design elements, which reflects the provincial nature of the work, and that Dossi and his collaborators made no effort to follow the contemporary Netherlandish practice of covering every available space with decoration. On the contrary, the cartoons appear to have been conceived very much in the spirit of the frescoes that inspired them, both in terms of palette and detailing. Considering that both the designers and the weavers would have been aware of contemporary Netherlandish tapestries, this suggests that they were self-consciously working to create a product faithful to a contemporary local style rather than following the example of foreign prototypes. This impetus was to be developed further in the weavings manufactured in Mantua and Florence under the direction of Rost and Nicolas Karcher in the following years, albeit with a very different sense of the aesthetic qualities requisite for tapestry design.

The pace of the Ferrarese establishment’s production does not seem to have been unduly affected by the departure for Florence of Rost and Nicolas Karcher in 1545. Battista, who died in 1548, was paid for providing cartoons of unknown subjects in 1546 and 1547. His assistants at this time were Camillo Filippi and Luca Fiammingho, who had relocated to Ferrara from Mantua in 1545 at the instigation of the duke. A project initiated by Battista but probably completed under Luca was an eight-piece set in wool



and silk depicting the *Months* and the *Seasons* (now lost), which was cited as “l'apparamento dell'Agricoltura” in the Este inventories. Landscapes appropriate to the season in question were portrayed in seven of the tapestries, each of which showed one of the Este residences, while the eighth displayed a hunting scene with Ercole II as the principal figure. The scheme may well reflect an awareness of Charles V's *Hunts of Maximilian*, which Rost could have seen in Brussels before his departure for Ferrara.<sup>21</sup>

In 1548 Luca, Camillo Filippi, and Girolamo da Carpi prepared cartoons for a set of *Grotesques* that were woven by 1551. The Este inventories record two separate ensembles of these, one of five pieces carried out in wool and silk, the other of four pieces including gold thread. Another five-piece set woven in 1553, described in inventories as the “Aquila bianca,” featured the Este eagle with open wings and the motto *SEMPRE VIVA* beneath its feet, displayed on a ground covered in landscapes—for which the cartoons were painted by Luca—and grotesques. Yet another lost set made at Ercole's workshop during the same period was known as the *Cavalli*. This group seems to have been initiated in 1542, when Filippi prepared two cartoons for it, and was expanded in 1554, the year Jacopo Vighi was paid for additional designs, which were woven by 1557.<sup>22</sup>

During the later years of Ercole's life, Leonardo da Brescia played an important role in the production of the duke's tapestries. Among the works he provided were four cartoons for a six-piece set devoted to the *Feats of Hercules* and two cartoons for a group

known as the *Città*, which depicted Ferrara, Modena, Reggio, and Brescello, the Este cities Ercole fortified or in which he built new palaces. In 1556–57 Leonardo executed cartoons for a set of landscapes made to decorate Ercole's private rooms and another for his audience chamber. The latter seems to have been a heraldic ensemble that was a tour de force of erudite and abstruse Este iconography. The largest piece depicted an armillary sphere in the middle of a landscape of trees and meadows, with a frieze of putti, animals, and fruit, showing a panther in one corner and a leopard in the other.<sup>23</sup> Leonardo also designed a seven-piece set known as the *Pergoline*, which represented pergolas with putti and other figures. Woven by Jan Karcher in 1558–59, this was made for the duke's bedchamber where it was still hanging in 1580, according to an inventory of that year. One piece made up of three separate sections joined together and two *entre-fenêtres* (both cut down) from this set survive at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. That these examples were made in the Ferrarese workshop for Ercole is beyond question because the large panel carries the following inscription in a cartouche held by a putto (fig. 211): HER. II FER. MUT [ . . . ] EG III [ . . . ] R DUX I (Ercole II, fourth duke of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio and first duke of Chartres).<sup>24</sup> With its combination of putti and pergolas, this set appears to respond to a model elaborated in fresco and tapestry designs by Giulio at Mantua in the 1540s (see cat. no. 57). Yet another of Leonardo's designs was for a five-piece set executed in 1559–60 that depicted

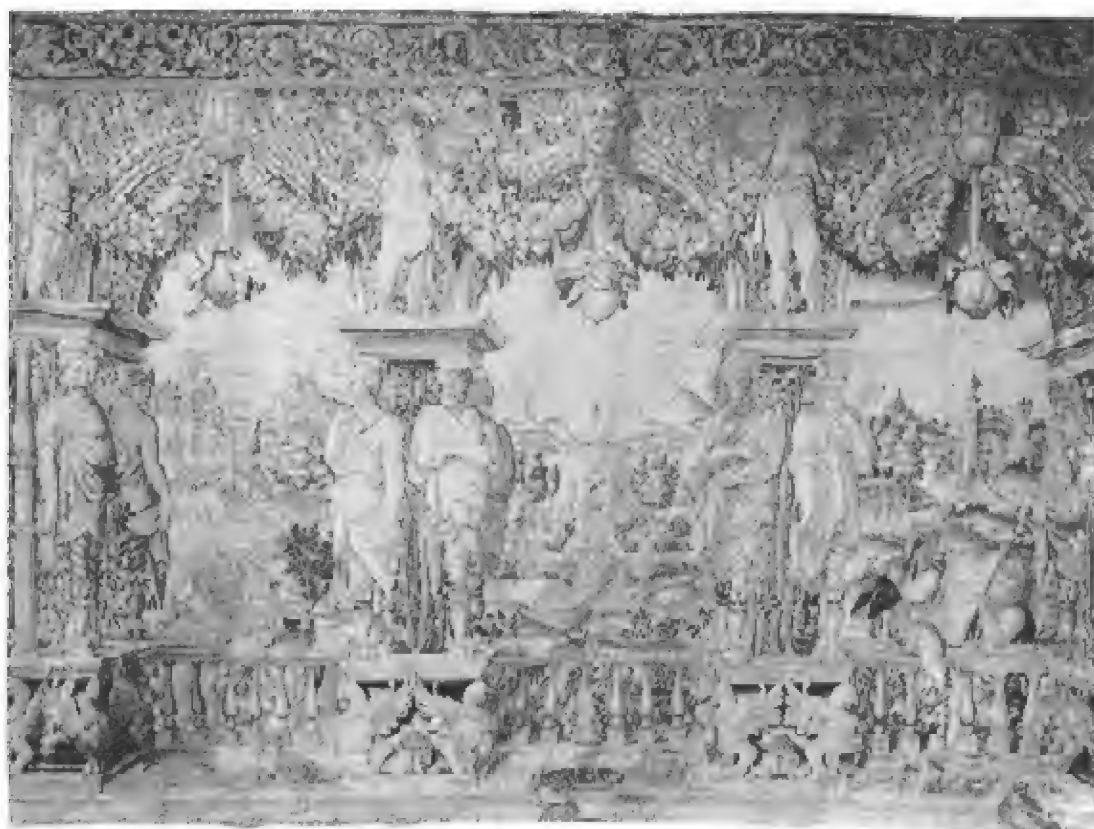


Fig. 211. *The Pergola* from the *Pergoline*. Tapestry designed by Leonardo da Brescia, woven in the workshop of Jan Karcher, Ferrara, 1558–59. Wool and silk, 345 x 452 cm. Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

fictive bronzes of the Virtues surrounded by feasts and tournaments in gardens and landscapes. The device of representing a theme via a trompe l'oeil work of art was also employed in a *Hercules* set (now lost) commissioned by Ercole from the Modenese artist Ludovico Settevecchi that was woven in Karcher's workshop in 1560–61, after the duke's death. Measuring just under 5 meters in height, each tapestry represented one of the feats of Hercules as if on a bronze relief, on a grotesque ground—hence the identification of the group in inventories as “Ercole in bronzo.”<sup>25</sup>

The works noted represent the principal production of Ercole's Ferrarese atelier between 1536 and 1561, some twelve sets comprising more than fifty tapestries.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the tapestries he made for the duke, Jan Karcher undertook at least one independent commission. This was for an eight-piece set devoted to the *Story of Saint George and Saint Maurelius*, the patron saints of Ferrara, ordered in October 1550 by the cathedral of Ferrara, where it survives.<sup>27</sup> Forti Grazzini has suggested that the commission may have been motivated by a desire on the part of the cathedral authorities to distance themselves from the Lutheran community that was developing in Ferrara under the patronage of Ercole's wife, Renée, who was sympathetic to the Reform movement. The agreement specified that the tapestries were to be woven in two years, although work must have extended into a third because some panels are dated 1553. Karcher guaranteed the use of good-quality materials and at least three ounces of silk per square *braccio*. He was to be paid weekly for completed work at a rate of 2 *scudi d'oro in oro* per square *braccio*. According to the contract, the main scenes of the cartoons were painted by Benvenuto Tisi, called il Garofalo, and Filippi, while the cartoons for the borders were executed by Luca Fiammingho. As Karcher started his work in 1550, the cartoons must have been executed in the course of 1549–50.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to the tapestries produced for Ercole, which are marked by erudite and literary allusions, this set—intended for a popular audience—was a straightforward narrative of the saints' lives, with emphasis on the details of their sufferings. During the nineteenth century the tapestries were hung in the choir between the Feast of Saint George (on April 23) and the Feast of Saint Maurelius (on May 7), a usage that may well have reflected a long-standing tradition. The weave of the set is relatively coarse, with six to seven warps per centimeter, but, as Forti Grazzini has noted, details are skillfully and clearly rendered and the faces are expressive. The appearance of the tapestries has been substantially altered by the fading of the lighter colors and by the loss of the darker tones used for the ground and architectural details, but the reds, blues, and greens are well preserved.

The *Saint George and Saint Maurelius* tapestries were produced at the same time as the set of *Grotesques* mentioned above that was made for Ercole. Even allowing for the fact that the former commission may have been woven in two or even three stages, this suggests that Jan Karcher had five or six looms fully occupied at any one time. However, the death of Ercole II in 1559 and that of Jan Karcher in 1562 marked a turning point in the Ferrarese manufactory. Luigi, Karcher's son, inherited the workshop, which continued to operate in the ducal household but, according to the scarce extant documentation, for the most part was occupied with providing a small number of decorative pieces for the palace. Ercole's successor, his son Alfonso II d'Este, had neither the resources nor the will to maintain the level of production supported by his father, although the inherited tapestry collection continued to contribute significantly to the magnificence of the Este homes.

The last notable tapestries made by the Karcher workshop were three panels depicting the *Life of the Virgin* commissioned by Como Cathedral. These were part of an ensemble with six other panels of *Scenes from the Old Testament* and the *Life of the Virgin*, which were carried out in the Netherlands and in Florence. One of the Como tapestries is lost, but two, the *Transportation of the Virgin*, 1562, and the *Marriage of the Virgin*, 1569, survive in the location for which they were executed. The earlier piece carries the mark of Jan Karcher, and the later one bears that of his son. The Milanese Giuseppe Arcimboldo was commissioned to design the *Transportation of the Virgin*, but the author of the *Marriage* is unknown. This designer may have been Luigi Karcher himself, as he was an artist as well as a weaver. Although the weavers of the Ferrara manufactory under Luigi were still technically proficient—as the *Marriage of the Virgin* demonstrates—by 1582 it appears to have been effectively defunct.<sup>29</sup>

#### MANTUA

A tapestry workshop was established in Mantua in late 1538 or early 1539 by Federico II Gonzaga, fifth marquis and first duke of Mantua, whose patronage is so defined by the achievements of Giulio Romano in architecture, painting, and design.<sup>30</sup> Although an atelier had operated in Mantua in the late fifteenth century, producing tapestries for the Gonzaga from designs by Andrea Mantegna and other artists, native production evidently languished during the first three decades of the sixteenth century. (The situation paralleled that in contemporary Ferrara.) Little is known of Federico's tapestry patronage before 1539, but it is clear that, by the time of his death in 1540, he had a sizable collection, which may have included sets designed by Giulio and woven in Brussels. The fact that he set up his manufactory in 1538 or 1539, suggests,



however, that his initiative was prompted by the example of his cousin Ercole II d'Este, who had founded his own workshop in Ferrara in 1536. Federico's undertaking was facilitated by the willingness of one of Ercole's chief weavers, Nicolas Karcher, to transfer to Mantua. Various documents attest to Karcher's activity in Mantua. In a letter of January 12, 1539, the craftsman stated that he would be pleased to serve Federico "in my art."<sup>31</sup> In October of that year Federico issued a decree regarding the provision of materials and food supplies to Karcher and the eleven assistants he needed to weave tapestries from designs that were to be supplied to him. According to a report of November 1539, Karcher had by then begun work on borders of tapestries, whose subject is not specified. Although weaving cannot have progressed far before Federico's death on June 28, 1540, Karcher delivered a thirteen-piece set of unknown subject by March 1541 to Federico's brother, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, who became regent of Mantua during the minority of the duke's son, Francesco III, who had inherited the title.<sup>32</sup>

Payments made in 1542 for work undertaken in 1541 reveal that by that date Karcher had made four portieres and a "quadro de tappezzarai dell'istoria di Moisè" (tapestry panel on the story of Moses). The wool was purchased from the Netherlands, the silk from Verona, and the gilt-metal thread from Milan.<sup>33</sup> The *Moses* panel is recorded as an independent piece in inventories and does not appear to be related to a set showing this subject, which is now thought to have been woven in the 1550s—when Karcher returned to Mantua after eight years in Florence. The portieres may have been part of a series of *Puttini* that was initiated under Federico but completed for Cardinal Ercole.

The genesis and iconographic program of this series have been analyzed by Forti Grazzini and Delmarcel.<sup>34</sup> The key to the reconstruction of the character and development of this project is a tapestry in Rome of *Venus, a Satyr, and Playing Putti*, with the emblems of Federico—Mount Olympus and the salamander—in the borders, which is based on one of a group of designs by Giulio (see cat. no. 57). It was evidently inspired by the same text in Philostratus's *Imagines* as that which inspired Alfonso d'Este's Titian paintings and Leo X's *Giochi di putti* tapestries (see above, pp. 229–33). Two other tapestries depicting putti among vine arbors survive (Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire, England, and Victoria and Albert Museum, London). While their putti motif is stylistically similar to that of the *Venus*, they do not show Federico's arms in their borders (which in any case may represent a later adaptation). Nevertheless, the three examples evidently relate to the same group of Giulio's putti drawings. Here it should be noted that the extended format of some of these drawings has

led Forti Grazzini to suggest that their scheme was devised for a now-lost fresco cycle, which was subsequently developed as a tapestry series for Federico, probably as a celebration, in pseudoclassical guise, of the rebirth of a new golden age under his rule.

These *Puttini* weavings are, in turn, closely related in theme and style to a group of seven other tapestries, four almost complete panels and three fragments, dispersed in Lisbon and Milan (see fig. 212 and cat. no. 58) and carrying Ercole's arms (the Gonzaga arms against a cardinal's hat) in the top border.<sup>35</sup> No preparatory drawings for this second group are known; however, its style and the relationship of the iconography of one of its panels to that of the design for an allegorical portiere that is unquestionably by Giulio (cat. no. 59) leave no doubt that the Mantuan master is the author. Whereas the panel with Federico's insignia is relatively coarse, incorporating only silk and wool, the pieces with Ercole's arms are very finely woven with wool, silk, and metallic thread.

The earliest certain description of the extended group of *Puttini* tapestries that is formed by these two series is provided by an inventory of 1563. Here it is described as containing ten large panels, two portieres, and two *soprapporte*. Considering the high quality of the pieces with Ercole's arms and the length of time that their manufacture would have required, it seems unlikely that this group could have been the large series of tapestries delivered in March 1541, in view of the other work Karcher executed during this period.<sup>36</sup> Further support for a date of weaving later than 1541 is provided by a document from July 1541 that states that Ercole had recently ordered tapestries "per suo passatempo" (for his diversion), and one of June 1542 noting that his agent in the Netherlands, Battista Cortese, was paid for obtaining wool for the "tappezzarai per Sua Signoria Reverendissima" (tapestries for the Most Reverend Lord). It may well be that Cortese's purchase was for the Lisbon-Milan *Puttini*, considering their fine quality, which is similar to that of the best Brussels tapestries of the day.<sup>37</sup> At any rate, there can be little question that the panels bearing Ercole's arms were made between June 28, 1540, when Federico died, and October 1545, when Karcher left Mantua for Florence.

Where the imagery of the first three pieces appears to have been fairly close to the spirit of Philostratus's *Imagines*, that of the panels with the cardinal's arms represents a change in terms of intention and imagery. While each of the later group shows putti playing and fighting beneath arbors constructed from various types of fruit- and nut-bearing plants, which support vines richly laden with fruit, many of the specific details have no precedent in Philostratus and appear to have been intended as an allegory of Gonzaga rule in Mantua, with specific references to Federico and Ercole. Thus, one scene depicts putti dancing in a circle while a woman in the foreground

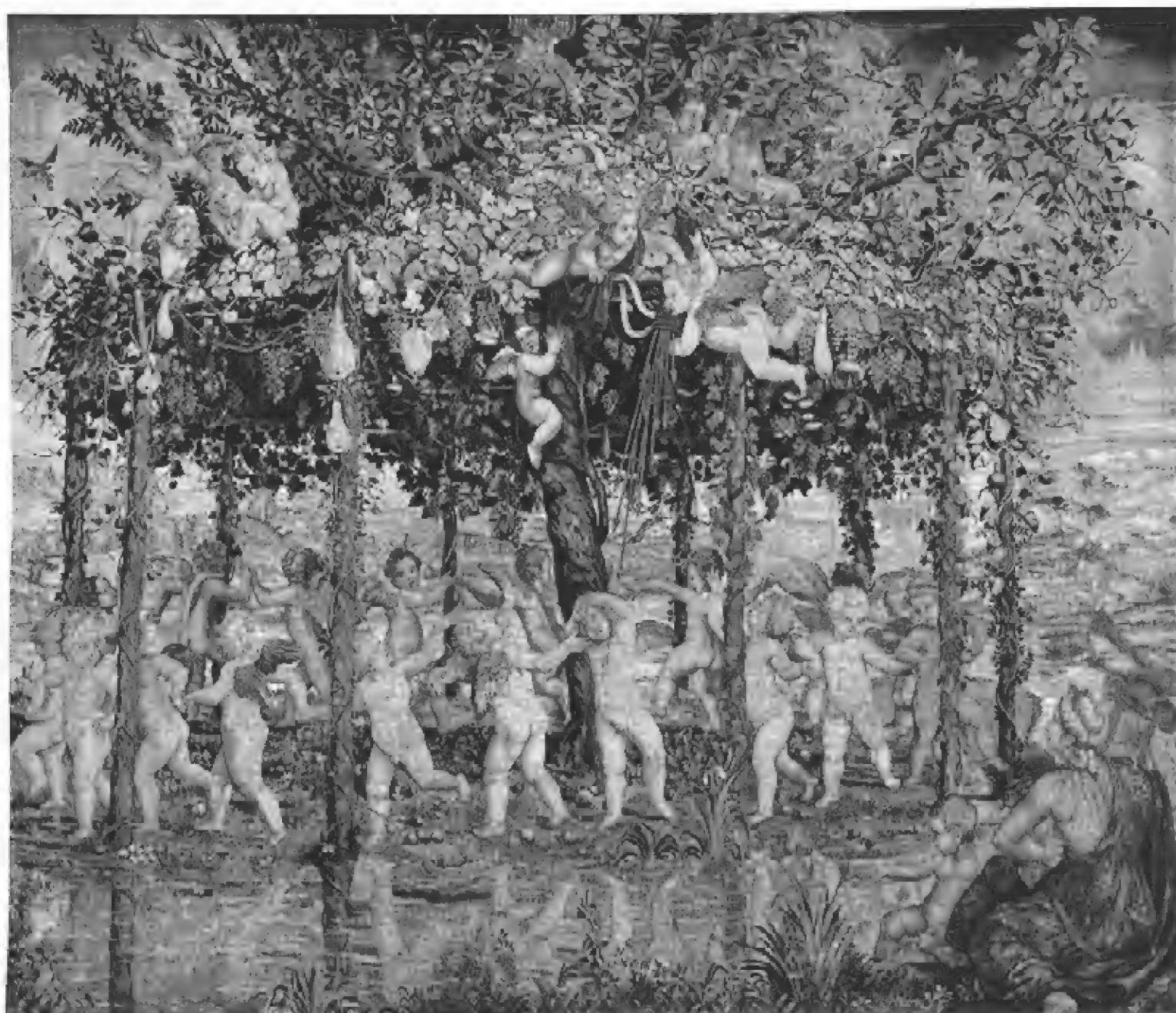


Fig. 212. *The Dance from the Puttini*. Tapestry designed by Giulio Romano, woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Mantua, ca. 1540–45. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 350 x 417 cm. Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon

plays a harp, identified by Delmarcel as a paraphrase of Virgil's description of Elysium, in which the souls dance to the sound of Orpheus's lyre (fig. 212). One of the putti here has been struck by an arrow that has fallen from a quiver attached to the pergola upended by another putto, a detail that Forti Grazzini has suggested alludes to Federico's death. Another scene, in the largest of the extant panels, and perhaps the focal point of the later series, shows Fortuna steering a boat as a putto in the foreground inscribes Ercole's name on a cartouche (cat. no. 58). Where the crotches in the *Imagines* were involved in picking apples, the activities of the Gonzaga *Puttini* take place beneath vines, which, considering Ercole's position and his

known sense of decorum in regard to tapestry subject matter, must have been symbolic of the Vintage of the Lord. Thus, as Forti Grazzini and Delmarcel have suggested, a set that may have been commissioned by Federico as a secular celebration of a new golden age under the Gonzaga was adapted and developed for Ercole, in part because of the Eucharistic resonance of its symbolism.<sup>38</sup> Although faded and damaged, the surviving tapestries provide a tantalizing glimpse of an ensemble that in its original form and color must have rivaled the finest contemporary Brussels weavings.

Whether Karcher wove other tapestries for Ercole during the early 1540s is unknown, but we might suppose that he did on the



evidence of his high volume of work in subsequent years in Florence. The only record of his relationship with the cardinal in this period is one that pertains to a gift of two birds from Ercole to the weaver at the Feast of Saint Martin in November 1544.<sup>39</sup> In October of the following-year Karcher relocated to Florence, where he established a workshop for Cosimo I de' Medici. He returned to Mantua in the spring of 1546 or 1548 for his daughter's wedding<sup>40</sup> and was accused of misusing part of the dowry the Gonzaga court had provided. Nevertheless, his connection to Ercole appears to have remained a productive one. Indeed, it has recently been suggested that Karcher may even have maintained a workshop in Mantua while he was living and working in Florence.<sup>41</sup> Documentation shows that in 1549 Ercole paid him for a "carpetta" made at his workshop in Florence, and correspondence of May 1551 suggests that the two men were negotiating a new contract at this time.<sup>42</sup> Although the nature of the commission for which Karcher was paid in 1549 is unknown, we can surmise that it was related to a set of the *Story of Moses* tapestries with the arms of Duke Guglielmo. Karcher returned to Mantua at an uncertain point in 1554 after January 6, when his contract with Cosimo de'

Medici expired. In July 1555, Duke Guglielmo issued an edict reconfirming the privileges granted to Karcher in 1539. The weaver appears to have remained in Mantua until his death in October 1562.

The *Moses* set was described in 1588 as comprising eight pieces. Six historiated panels survived into modern times (see figs. 213, 214), but three were destroyed by fire in 1906.<sup>43</sup> The two additional panels, one of which remains (fig. 215), were *soprapporte* with putti playing among swags, evidently inspired by Leo X's *Giochi di putti* tapestries, in borders that were en suite with those of the historiated works. All of the extant tapestries, which are now in the Museo del Duomo, Milan, carry the arms of Guglielmo Gonzaga, who became duke in 1550. One piece also carries the inscriptions GUGLIELMUS DUX MANUAE and MARCHIO MONTIS FERRATI. The set was given by Guglielmo to Cardinal Carlo Borromeo sometime before 1566. The inscriptions and the absence of Carlo's arms from the borders indicate that the group was not originally intended for the cardinal. Rather, we can assume that they were made for Guglielmo, who presented them to him in an attempt to curry favor, following the election of Carlo's uncle, Giovanni Angelo de' Medici, as Pope Pius IV in December 1559. Through his



Fig. 213. *The Passage through the Red Sea* from the *Story of Moses*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Mantua, ca. 1553–62. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 360 x 630 cm. Museo del Duomo, Milan



Fig. 214. *The Raising of the Brazen Serpent* from the *Story of Moses*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Mantua, ca. 1553–62. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 377 x 380 cm. Museo del Duomo, Milan



Fig. 215. *Puttini with the Gonzaga Arms*. Tapestry woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Mantua, ca. 1553–62. Wool and silk, 190 x 322 cm. Museo del Duomo, Milan



sister's marriage Carlo was related to the Gonzaga, who benefited considerably from the cardinal's influence after he was promoted by Pius. In these circumstances, the gift must have represented only a small sacrifice on the part of Ercole and Guglielmo.<sup>44</sup>

Both the designer and the place of manufacture of the *Moses* set are undocumented, but scholars have generally assumed that it was produced by Nicolas Karcher. As Karcher's contract with Cosimo de' Medici allowed him to accept independent commissions, and as the weaver appears to have been involved in negotiations with Ercole in 1551, it may be that work was started and even completed in Florence. It is equally possible that the set was completed or woven in entirety in Mantua, in view of Karcher's return there in 1554. A terminus post quem is provided for two of the panels by the incorporation in their borders of a cartouche showing Judith decapitating Holofernes, which is based on a Bernard Salomon woodcut that was first published in 1553.<sup>45</sup>

The identity of the *Moses* set's patron and the meaning of its themes have both been the subject of debate. The presence of Guglielmo's arms in all the tapestries might lead us to believe that the duke himself commissioned them. However, Guglielmo, who was only twelve when his brother died in 1550, remained a minor until 1556, and his uncle Ercole acted as regent of Mantua, holding the position until 1561—five years after the duke reached his majority. As Delmarcel has suggested, it is therefore probable that the set was ordered by Ercole on Guglielmo's behalf. For this reason, the subjects of the series must have had resonance for Ercole as well as for his nephew. Moses represented a paradigm of statesmanship, leading his people out of Egypt, and vignettes in the borders represent Virtues traditionally associated with leadership, such as Charity and Justice. Moreover, the theme of guidance is emphasized by vignettes of the archangel Raphael and Tobias that appear in some of the borders.<sup>46</sup> The subjects thus provided flattering analogies for Guglielmo and also for Ercole, who had assumed the secular leadership of the Mantuan state during his nephew's minority in addition to the religious responsibility he already bore as cardinal.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, there may have been additional meaning for Ercole in the figure of Moses, who was commonly considered a prototype for Christ, as in the frescoes in the upper levels of the Sistine Chapel. Delmarcel has therefore hypothesized that the set provided a veiled allusion to Ercole's own ambition to become pope at the time it was commissioned.

As Adelson and Delmarcel have noted, the designs of the *Moses* tapestries show various influences. Some, particularly the *Passage through the Red Sea* (fig. 213), reflect Giulio's style. Others reveal the mark of a different hand or even a number of different hands, as their elements range from the stolid and rather ungainly figure of

the Moses who receives the Tablets of the Law to the protagonists in the *Raising of the Brazen Serpent* (fig. 214), whose elongated and muscular torsos recall the sophisticated mannerism of Bronzino, the principal designer for Cosimo de' Medici's manufactory. Adelson has suggested that the *Brazen Serpent* may have been designed by Benedetto Pagni da Pescia, who was an assistant to Giulio in Mantua before working in Florence as a rival of Bronzino.<sup>48</sup>

Although Nicolas Karcher may have made other tapestries for Ercole Gonzaga during the late 1550s, no such works are documented. With the death of the master weaver in 1562 and of the patron in 1563, the Mantua manufactory appears to have closed.

## FLORENCE

The founder of the Florentine tapestry workshops was Cosimo I de' Medici, who was appointed duke of Florence in 1537 at the age of seventeen, after the murder of the previous duke, his dissolute and tyrannical cousin Alessandro de' Medici.<sup>49</sup> Cosimo's position was immediately challenged by forces opposed to Medici rule in Florence. As a consequence, the first years of Cosimo's accession were marked by armed combat, torture, and executions, as he first won and then consolidated his power. He married Eleonora di Toledo in 1539 and relocated his residence in May 1540 to the former seat of the Florentine Republic, the Palazzo della Signoria, known as the Palazzo Vecchio after 1549. The move was made in part to symbolize Cosimo's complete control over Florentine government and in part to provide sufficient space for his and his wife's joint household and rooms of adequate scale for the reception of important guests. Between 1540 and 1545 extensive refurbishment and redecoration were undertaken in both the private apartments and the traditional audience halls of the palace. The program supplemented the existing decorations with sculptures glorifying the Medici line (statues by Baccio Bandinelli added to the Salone dei Cinquecento) and frescoes (Agnolo Bronzino's showing Moses in the Cappella di Eleonora and Francesco Salviati's portraying Furius Camillus, the Roman Republican leader, in the Sala dell'Udienza). All provided a celebration by proxy for Cosimo himself.

Cosimo had inherited some seventy or so decorative and verdure tapestries, many with the Medici arms, from Alessandro. He also purchased about twenty tapestries from Alessandro's widow, Margaret, later duchess of Parma, including a high-quality set of the *Story of Tobias*, probably of Brussels origin and perhaps after a design by Bernaert van Orley.<sup>50</sup> But these were clearly inadequate for Cosimo: they lacked both the grandeur of the tapestries of contemporary courts elsewhere in Europe and the iconography he required as he tightened his grip on Florentine government. In the course of early 1545 the duke therefore embarked on the next

logical step of his decorative program. Correspondence with his agents in the Netherlands indicates that they must have been instructed to provide him with information about designs and tapestries available in the marketplace at this time. On April 30, 1545, Cosimo's agent at the imperial court in Brussels, Giovan Battista Ricasoli, bishop of Cortona, wrote from Antwerp to inform him of a seven-piece set of *Vulcan* tapestries he had seen. Alternatively, he suggested, Cosimo could send his own designs from Italy, but if he did so, the landscapes should be left blank, as the Netherlands craftsmen were experts in this matter. In a letter of May 23, however, Cosimo responded that he should stand by for further instructions.<sup>51</sup> Evidently the duke was alert to another idea. Indeed, as Adelson has demonstrated in her reconstruction of the development of the Medici workshops, the pursuit of purchases from the Low Countries coincided with inquiries regarding the possibility of funding a native manufactory.

The idea of creating a Florentine manufactory emerged as the result of an approach made to Cosimo early in 1545 by Bernardo di Zanobi Saliti, a Florentine silk merchant. Writing from Ferrara, Saliti stated that Netherlands tapestry weavers had come to him and asked if a group of about fifty of them might resettle in Italy, particularly in Florence, and that "such art would be of the utmost importance for this city because it would expand the manner in which it could be developed."<sup>52</sup> In a second letter, of April of the same year, the merchant guaranteed that the weavers were from Brussels, and that they were of the best quality and declared that "I am most certain that in a short time such art could be able to flourish in this place." His letter adumbrated the weavers' requests for pay (5,000 scudi for five years), for exemptions from taxes on food and wine, and for accommodation, along with his own expectations. He concluded this sales pitch with a vision that combined flattery with commercial incentive: "recalling to your excellency that in Brussels there are about 15,000 men who work in this trade. For this city [Florence], so full of fine talents, in a short time [this trade] could do very well if expanded so that Rome and the kingdom of Naples could supply themselves well from here. [The tapestries] would not cost more than those of Flanders but would be just as perfect in design, which each man would take on most willingly."<sup>53</sup>

The appeal to establish a native industry was astute and evidently caught Cosimo's attention. Annotations in his hand on Saliti's second letter testify to the care and attention the duke paid to this matter. Moreover, in a letter of September 19, 1545, to his new agent in Brussels, Don Francesco di Toledo, Cosimo used words similar to those in Saliti's correspondence: "in a short time, one could set up to do this type of work so that it would no longer be

necessary for the citizens of this state and the surrounding areas to still go to Flanders to supply themselves with tapestries."<sup>54</sup> In contrast to his peers in Mantua and Ferrara, who were concerned solely with acquiring suitable hangings for their residences, during the 1540s Cosimo was extremely interested in promoting the Florentine economy through the development of new trades. He established a mining industry with German workers in 1542 and invited Lorenzo Torrentino, a famous printer, to set up a ducal printing press in 1547.<sup>55</sup>

A letter from Saliti to Cosimo written at the end of June 1545 provided new details about the weavers and the quality of their work. However, in the late summer the duke had not yet decided between purchasing tapestries from the Netherlands and the more innovative but complex scheme of establishing his own manufactory. Adelson has suggested that it was probably the long-standing controversy regarding whether Florence or Ferrara was the preeminent city that finally moved Cosimo to found his workshop. This issue had first been raised at the papal court in 1541 by Ercole II d'Este, who claimed that his family was older and nobler than Cosimo's. The dispute escalated following new agitation over the matter by the Ferrarese ambassador at the French court in the late spring of 1545, and Cosimo recalled the Florentine ambassador to France on May 30, 1545. In Adelson's analysis, at this time Cosimo would likely have wanted to demonstrate the grandeur of his household by establishing his own weaving atelier, one that would eclipse that of Ercole in Ferrara. The duke must have resolved to start his workshop during the summer months, and Saliti visited Florence in July and August, presumably to finalize the details of the arrangements. By the end of the autumn Jan Rost and Nicolas Karcher had both moved to Florence along with a number of fellow weavers. (Whether Cosimo was consciously stealing one of Ercole's principal weavers in the person of Karcher is unclear.) The weavers' names are never mentioned in Saliti's correspondence, but this may have been a wise precaution as he was writing from Ferrara. At any rate, the fact that Rost and Karcher and their workers were able to relocate so soon after Saliti's letters leaves little doubt that they were the subject of his correspondence.<sup>56</sup>

Rost arrived in Florence at the end of August 1545 and met with Cosimo and his primary court artist, Agnolo Bronzino, at Poggio a Caiano on the twenty-eighth of that month. As documentation indicates, several major projects were initiated on this occasion. The esteem in which Cosimo held the enterprise is attested by the location chosen for the weavers' workshop: the sculpture garden at San Marco, where Lorenzo de' Medici had established a collection of antiquities and which had functioned as a school for young artists, including Michelangelo during his formative years. Rost





Fig. 216. *Abundance*. Tapestry designed by Bronzino, woven in the workshop of Jan Rost, Florence, 1545–46. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 234 x 146 cm. Palazzo Pitti, Florence



Fig. 217. *Spring*. Tapestry designed by Bronzino, woven in the workshop of Jan Rost, Florence, 1545–46. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 236 x 168 cm. Palazzo Pitti, Florence

had fifteen weavers working with him, according to a note he sent to Cosimo in November 1545.<sup>57</sup>

The first task to which Rost turned his attention was the translation of a cartoon by Bronzino into a tapestry portiere that was delivered to Cosimo in December 1545 (fig. 216). Although this piece has frequently been taken as a portrayal of Spring, it is correctly identified as *Abundance* (*Dovizia*) and is described as such in some of the earliest inventories. Depicting an idyllic landscape viewed through a doorway, the composition appears to be an allegory of the rebirth of an Augustan golden age under Cosimo. The plant carried by the female personification may represent one of the exotic products of the botanical garden Cosimo had founded in Pisa in 1539 or may allude to a similar garden he established in Florence late in 1545. The design seems to have been conceived as a test of the weavers' ability to reproduce a challenging range of textural and spatial effects, and, indeed, in February 1546 Cosimo

directed that it be sent to the Netherlands to be evaluated. Bronzino, for one, appears to have been dissatisfied with the results. Following a meeting at which Rost displayed both the tapestry and the cartoon to Cosimo, the duke's majordomo, Riccio, reported that "the master himself was not very satisfied, promising better." In view of the striking stylistic change visible in Bronzino's subsequent designs, it is generally assumed that Riccio's remarks refer to Bronzino rather than to Rost.<sup>58</sup>

Certainly, the next tapestries woven by Rost's workshop from Bronzino cartoons are of a very different character. These are two portieres—*Justice Liberating Innocence* (cat. no. 61) delivered to the duke on April 22, 1546, and *Spring* (fig. 217), delivered along with a tapestry cover on May 15 of the same year.<sup>59</sup> Here the detailed, distant landscape of the *Abundance* is replaced by friezelike compositions with an emphasis on line and large areas of strong color. In style they are much closer than the *Abundance* to the *maniera*

Fig. 218. *The Resurrection*. Tapestry designed by Francesco Salviati, woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Florence, ca. 1546–49. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 228 x 223 cm. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence



Bronzino had developed in the frescoes for the Cappella di Eleonora and in such panel paintings as the *Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time* of the mid-1540s (National Gallery, London), which are marked by dense surface patterns, claustrophobic space, polished surfaces, and vibrant color. The *Justice* and the *Spring* are complementary allegories of the state of Florence under Cosimo's rule, the first representing deliverance from his tyrannical predecessor, Alessandro de' Medici, through Cosimo's succession (symbolized by Justice), and the second depicting the joyous spring that has been inaugurated under the new duke.

Nicolas Karcher, whose arrival in Florence was announced to Cosimo on October 26, 1545, established a workshop in the Via dei Cimatori, which was some distance from Rost's manufactory. Materials were supplied to Karcher in January 1546, and the first tapestries completed in his workshop were a sumpter cover, delivered to Cosimo on June 5 of the same year, and a *Lamentation* (cat.

no. 63) after a cartoon by Salviati, delivered the following July 31.<sup>60</sup> The *Lamentation* was the first figural tapestry from Karcher's workshop and also the first of Salviati's cartoons undertaken in Florence for Cosimo, and as such it must have been regarded as a test piece for both the weaver and the artist.<sup>61</sup> It was not, however, the first tapestry cartoon made by Salviati, who designed a set of the *Story of Alexander* in the late 1530s or early 1540s for Pier Luigi Farnese, duke of Castro, which was woven in the Netherlands (see fig. 120).<sup>62</sup> The *Lamentation* composition was well received, and its success led to the granting of two additional commissions to Salviati for religious subjects, the first an *Ecce Homo*, and the second a *Resurrection* (fig. 218). The *Ecce Homo* is cited in a 1553 list of tapestries woven in the Rost and Karcher workshops and intended for use in the chapels in Cosimo's country villas.<sup>63</sup> The first weaving of this design was considered to be badly executed, and Karcher was therefore required to produce a second version. The *Resurrection*



was carried out about the same time as the *Ecce Homo*. Made for Benedetto Accolti, cardinal of Ravenna, who had been appointed as the imperial legate to the Florentine court in 1544 or 1545, the tapestry was inherited by Cosimo in 1549. All three of these designs, like Salviati's paintings of the period, combine areas of intense naturalism and detailed observation with passages of strident artificiality, with a focus on surface decoration, in compositions notable for their bright color and elegant line. In its emphasis on sinuous line and surface pattern, Salviati's production reflects the influence of Giulio, whose work he would have seen during his visit to Mantua in 1541, an influence which is also apparent in the frescoes Salviati executed in Cosimo's Sala dell'Udienza.

Cosimo did not establish contracts with Rost and Karcher until October 20, 1546, when three-year agreements were finalized. As Adelson has demonstrated, they did not provide for a single ducal atelier but rather placed Rost and Karcher in charge of separate, rival workshops.<sup>64</sup> The duke agreed to pay each weaver a yearly stipend of 600 scudi; to pay for the materials of the tapestries woven for him and the wages of the weavers engaged in their production; to provide working quarters; to pay for the construction of twenty-four looms—a large number by contemporary Italian standards—for each manufactory; and to pay for the tapestries at a predetermined rate based on the quality of the materials and fineness of the weave. While Cosimo guaranteed to provide commissions to keep between four and six of the looms in each establishment working, in order to encourage a native industry he stipulated that the weavers were to take on freelance commissions to keep twelve looms in operation at any one time and that they were to train local youths who wished to learn their craft. The goal of stimulating a native industry is specifically articulated in Rost's renewal contract, which was drawn up in 1549. (This intention, as well as the notion that the quality of the local artists made Florence an ideal location for such manufacturing, was repeated by Vasari in his life of Salviati and his *Ragionamenti*.) According to both the initial and renewal contracts agreed to by Rost and Karcher, the two master weavers were to adhere to the same statutes as those issued by Charles V for the Netherlandish tapestry industry in May 1544. Although the first tapestries they produced carried their names written out in full, from 1546 their weavings bore a device composed of two F's (for *Factum Florentiae*) on either side of a crowned lily (the symbol of Florence), thus following the Brussels model of utilizing a town mark.

Much of the effort of the two workshops during the period of their first three-year contracts was devoted to the *Story of Joseph*, after cartoons by Bronzino, Jacopo da Pontormo, and Salviati, and

the *Grotesque Spalliere*, from cartoons by Francesco Ubertini, il Bacciacca. (Rost's and Karcher's successful completion of the trial pieces they had been assigned must have led Cosimo to entrust them with these more ambitious projects.) It appears that these were two of the commissions discussed in the course of Cosimo's meeting with Rost and Bronzino in August 1545. We can assume this because soon after the meeting Riccio, Cosimo's majordomo, was ordered to take the measurements of two rooms, one of which would subsequently house the *Joseph* panels. Moreover, we know that Bronzino and Pontormo were working on cartoons for the series by November 1545, while Bacciacca negotiated his salary for the cartoons of the *Grotesque Spalliere* in October of that year.

Rost must have started on the first two narrow panels of the *Joseph* group shortly after the meeting of August 1545 because two pieces were nearing completion when he signed his contract with Cosimo in October 1546. Intended as an all-surrounding decoration for the Sala dei Duecento, also called the Sala del Consiglio, this set is one of the most outstanding achievements of sixteenth-century tapestry weaving. All twenty pieces survive (ten with the Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di



Fig. 219. *Joseph Flees from Potiphar's Wife* from the *Story of Joseph*. Tapestry designed by Bronzino and collaborators, woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Florence, ca. 1548–49. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 570 x 457 cm. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence



Fig. 220. *Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream* from the *Story of Joseph*. Tapestry designed by Salviati, woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Florence, ca. 1547–48. Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 570 x 446 cm. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

Firenze [see figs. 219, 220] and ten in the Palazzo del Quirinale in Rome).<sup>65</sup> The theme, inspired by Philo Judaeus's first-century A.D. celebration of Joseph as the ideal statesman, was already familiar to Florentines from its treatment in Medici panegyric. It offers a complex allegory of Cosimo's origins, virtues, and intentions in the context of a story that deals with divine providence, reconciliation and renewal. Joseph's sale by his jealous brothers and his subsequent triumphal return to his homeland provided a resonant metaphor for the Medici's expulsion from Florence and their eventual return to the city. Moreover, Joseph was especially meaningful as a symbol for Cosimo in terms of his status as a junior member of his family and as the savior of his people after the excesses of his uncle Alessandro.

As Bronzino was at Poggio a Caiano when the subject and location of this commission were established, it seems likely that he played a major part in determining the form and composition of the series, albeit within the framework of a program devised by court humanists. Three of the cartoons were executed by

Pontormo, but according to Vasari these were not well received, which is no doubt the reason he was not entrusted with more designs.<sup>66</sup> Sixteen cartoons were executed by Bronzino, who from the summer of 1548 received assistance in carrying out the main fields from Raffaellino dal Colle (with whom he had worked at the Villa Imperiale in Pesaro in the 1530s) and from Lorenzo di Bastiano Zucchetti and Alessandro Allori in producing the borders. Although Bronzino seems to have enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the design of the series, the cartoon for *Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream* was prepared by Salviati. Vasari relates that Salviati was given this assignment because Cosimo was so impressed by the designs the artist had prepared for a set of *Tarquin and Lucretia* for Cristofano Rinieri.<sup>67</sup> Vasari himself was evidently highly impressed by Salviati's *Joseph* composition, and it was of this that he wrote the flattering description of Salviati's skill as a tapestry designer quoted above (pp. 9–10).<sup>68</sup> Not only the competitive atmosphere in the Florentine workshops but also a debate that was raging at the Accademia del Disegno must have inspired Salviati to conceive a virtuoso design. This debate, the *Paragone*, initiated by Benedetto Varchi in March 1547, concerned the question of whether painting or sculpture was the superior art form. As Adelson has noted, Salviati's inclusion of a dazzling interpretation of the famous Roman Dioscuri in his cartoon was evidently his answer in favor of painting.<sup>69</sup> On the strength of the *Joseph* design, Salviati would presumably have been offered additional ducal tapestry commissions had he stayed in Florence. He departed for Rome in September 1548, however, and his brilliant but brief collaboration with the early Medici workshops came to an end.

Six pieces of the *Joseph* set had been completed by autumn 1548, when they were among the trappings that accompanied Cosimo's son Francesco to Genoa, where he met Prince Philip of Spain, himself a noted tapestry collector.<sup>70</sup>

Whereas the *Story of Joseph* set was intended for the Sala dei Duecento, the *Grotesque Spalliere* (see fig. 221) were destined for the Sala dell'Udienza. Bachiacca negotiated his salary for executing the cartoons for this ten-piece ensemble in October 1545, and the weavings were completed by 1553.<sup>71</sup> The panels (now dispersed between the Italian Embassy, London, and the Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze) were designed to relate specifically to the context in which they were displayed: they fit exactly into the dado space beneath frescoes painted by Salviati. In place, they covered the frescoes that Salviati had executed in the dado, but they were not ordered to replace them. Rather they were alternative decorations for special occasions. Adelson has suggested that the scheme of the ensemble may have been devised by Salviati himself, who, during a sojourn in Rome in the early



1540s, would have seen Leo X's *Giochi di putti* and *Grotesque* sets, similar tapestries similarly combined with frescoes.<sup>72</sup> Whether or not they were influenced by these models, the *Grotesque Spalliere* as a group provide an extraordinary wealth of ornament and detail, a dazzling display of Cosimo's magnificent style and eclectic taste.

Adelson has shown that Karcher's workshop was smaller than Rost's, although the initial contracts with the weavers indicate that they were to be the same size. Rost's renewal contract specifies that in September 1549, when it was signed he had twenty-four looms and that he could expand his establishment as he wished. He was also allowed to build a wardrobe in the garden for the storage of materials and a workshop in which wool and silk could be dyed. The growth and success of his manufactory are indicated by a census taken in 1552, at which time he had eighty-three weavers working under his direction.<sup>73</sup> Karcher's renewal contract, drawn up on November 17, 1550, mentions twelve looms in operation and promises to add six more. The clear distinction that had developed between the workshops in the early years of production is reflected as well in the fact that Rost's contract was renewed for ten years, while Karcher's was renewed for only three, apparently the time required for the completion of the projects that were already under way.<sup>74</sup> Not all the reasons for this distinction are

known, but documents reveal that Karcher was less reliable than Rost and that he was beset by financial difficulties.<sup>75</sup>

According to a list of tapestries updated on February 6, 1550, Rost and Karcher had delivered seventy-three tapestries by this time, of which forty-nine pieces (including thirty-five sumpter covers) had been delivered by Rost and twenty-four (seventeen of them covers) by Karcher. Among these were at least seven of the *Joseph* tapestries and six of the *Bachiacca Grotesque Spalliere*. The list also cites an armorial portiere with the Medici-Toledo arms from designs by Benedetto Pagni da Pescia, that had been executed in the workshop of the first independent Florentine weaver, Francesco di Pacino.<sup>76</sup> The chronology of production by the Rost and Karcher workshops during the following three years is difficult to establish. Twenty-three tapestries were delivered in this period, including additions made by Karcher to the *Netherlandish Tobias* set Cosimo had purchased from Margaret in 1539, a second armorial portiere—this one begun by Pacino but completed by Karcher—at least nine *Joseph* tapestries, and another four of the *Bachiacca Grotesque Spalliere*.<sup>77</sup> Rost's and Karcher's workshops wove some of the hangings in a four-piece set of the *Months* from cartoons by Bachiacca during these years (see fig. 222).<sup>78</sup> The variations in the lengths of the *Months* panels clearly indicates that this



Fig. 221. View of the *Grotesque Spalliere* as hung in 1980 in the Sala dell'Udienza, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

set was envisioned for a specific location, but what the site may have been is not known. The tapestries are extremely finely woven. Indeed, in 1558, when Pope Paul IV was considering the establishment of a workshop in Rome, one of the *Months* was sent to him—along with *Justice Liberating Innocence*—as a sample of Rost's work. Moreover, Vasari singled the set out for special praise in his discussion of Bachiacca.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, the *Months* are extraordinarily fragile because they were woven with a silk warp and a silk weft, and large sections of the weft have been lost. Representing genre scenes, many derived from Northern print sources, shown within fictive textile hangings, this was the only set made for Cosimo in the early years of Florentine production that displays no overt references to the Medici. Equally, the peace and harmony evoked by their pastoral themes can be interpreted as a flattering reflection on Cosimo's reign.

During this period Rost also undertook a substantial number of contracts for patrons other than Cosimo. Some of these, such as a seven-piece set of *Grotesques* woven 1549–50 as a gift for Bishop Paolo Giovio,<sup>80</sup> may have been produced at Cosimo's behest, and others seem to have been made as freelance exercises. Among the

latter was the set depicting *Tarquin and Lucretia* executed for the Florentine merchant Cristofano Rinieri, whose family provided Rost with financial backing. Other tapestries were produced for the Salviati family, to which Cosimo was related through his mother. These included a *Meeting of Dante and Virgil* (Minneapolis Institute of Arts) from a design carried out by Salviati, possibly with the assistance of the Netherlandish artist Jan van der Straet, known as Stradanus;<sup>81</sup> and a nine-piece set on the *Seasons and Ages of Man*, lost but known from drawings (Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, Florence; Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Nationalmuseum, Stockholm) and seventeenth-century copies.<sup>82</sup> Rost also received a commission, in 1550, for a four-piece set treating the *Story of Saint Mark* for the choir of San Marco, Venice (Museo Marciano), from designs by Jacopo Sansovino, which was followed by an order for a *paliotto* depicting *Saint Mark, Antonio Grimani, and Three Virtues*.<sup>83</sup> In 1552 he even made a set of tapestries of unknown subject for Cosimo's rival Ercole II d'Este. As this list of works and patrons demonstrates, Rost was clearly fulfilling Cosimo's dream of creating a commercially viable tapestry manufactory in Florence.



Fig. 222. *March, April, and May* from the *Months*. Tapestry designed by Bachiacca, woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Florence, ca. 1550–53. Silk and gilt-metal-wrapped thread, 261 x 439 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Despite all this activity, the high cost of locally woven tapestries was to be a determining issue in the long-term development of the Florentine workshops. Cosimo purchased a high-quality set of Brussels tapestries of the *Story of the Creation* (see fig. 122) from the Antwerp merchant Jan van der Walle on June 13, 1551, which may indicate that the duke was frustrated with the slow rate of Rost's and Karcher's production and a dawning awareness of the expense of weaving tapestries in Florence. Indeed, as Adelson demonstrated in her study of the Rost and Karcher workshops, the cost per ell of Florentine tapestries was considerably higher than that of the *Creation* set.<sup>84</sup> A list of tapestries completed by Karcher was drawn up in September 1553, presumably with a view to deciding whether to renew his contract. The contract expired on October 21 of that year and was not renewed—perhaps in part because the timing was inopportune: Cosimo was then embroiled in an expensive war with Siena. Karcher returned to Mantua at some point after February 6, 1554. By this date the Rost and Karcher workshops had completed 120 tapestries for Cosimo of which 76 pieces were sumpter covers to be used for pack animals and carriages.<sup>85</sup>

With the departure of Karcher for Mantua, the character of the Florentine workshops changed. Karcher's atelier and equipment were taken over by the *Creata Fiorentini*, Italian weavers whom he and Rost had trained. These craftsmen were now placed under the direction of 'Tanai di Nicola de' Medici, who had been responsible for overseeing the accounts of Cosimo's two manufactories and reporting on their production since 1545. Two new workshops were built in the course of late 1555 and 1556.<sup>86</sup> Rost remained in Florence, heading an independent workshop and producing little more for Cosimo. In 1558 Cosimo sent him to Rome to establish a tapestry workshop for Pope Paul IV, but this enterprise foundered with the death of Paul in 1559. Rost's Florentine workshop was taken over by his son, Giovanni, in January 1560. Rost père died in January 1564.

The newly constituted manufactories were under direct ducal control, and Cosimo's earlier intentions to promote freelance activity seem to have been replaced by a plan in which the manufactories were to provide large numbers of tapestries for a grand decorative scheme for the Palazzo Vecchio. The products of the *Creata Fiorentini* were coarser than those of their predecessors. Adelson has ascribed this development to a change in the function of the tapestries. The earlier panels were intended for the grandest rooms of the palace and were installed only on special occasions, which required hangings of exquisite quality. At other times they remained in storage. In contrast, from the early 1550s, the later tapestries, carried out as part of a program of redecoration of several

suites of apartments in the Palazzo Vecchio, were intended to hang every day. Therefore they had to be turned out more quickly and had to be more durable than the fine weavings of Rost and Karcher. And thus they were made with a lower warp count and more wool than earlier, delicate tapestries, which featured a high silk and metallic thread content. The regular use of the coarse tapestries took a toll on them: they have survived in lower numbers proportionately than the fine products.<sup>87</sup>

The lowering of the standards of the tapestry production coincided with Vasari's return to Florence and his subsequent orchestration of the Palazzo Vecchio's decorative program. It is not clear whether Vasari was involved in the decision to restructure the workshops and manufacture tapestries of lower quality. However, evidence that Cosimo had committed himself to a change in direction before Vasari took charge of the refurbishing is provided by a tapestry showing *Apollo and Marsyas*, the one extant panel from a four-piece set devoted to the *Metamorphoses* that was commissioned from Bronzino in 1554, which already manifests a coarsened technique.

In 1555 Vasari was appointed artistic superintendent of Cosimo's architectural and decorative schemes, an office he enjoyed until 1572 and which made him responsible for directing the refurbishing of much of the Palazzo Vecchio. Work began in the rooms of the *Quartiere degli Elementi* in spring 1555. Conceived by Vasari in conjunction with the humanists Cosimo Bartoli and Vincenzo Borghini, the decorative program for this area included tapestries, painted friezes, and ceiling panels. The iconographic and formal elements of the central fields and borders of the tapestries were echoed in the frescoed ceilings and the friezes, to create an all-surrounding celebration of Cosimo and the other Medici.<sup>88</sup>

Vasari had a reputation for working fast, and this must have appealed to Cosimo. Certainly, work on the new suites proceeded at a hectic pace. Designs for tapestry cartoons and frescoes were painted for the *Sala di Cerere* in 1555–56, and an eight-piece set of the *Story of Ceres* was completed for this room by January 1558 (three preparatory drawings for the tapestries survive); the *Sala di Opi*, also known as the *Sala di Cibele*, was decorated early in 1557, and a seven-piece set of the *Story of Cybele* was woven for it by January 1558.<sup>89</sup> Contemporaneously with these projects, the decoration of the *Sala di Giove* and the *Sala di Ercole* took place. Girolamo Macchietti prepared cartoons for an eight-piece set of the *Story of Jupiter* in late 1556 and for a seven-piece *Story of Hercules* in 1557 (both woven 1558–59). One panel of the *Hercules* group survives today (fig. 223).<sup>90</sup>

The artist who executed the cartoons for the *Ceres* and *Cybele* sets is undocumented, but Vasari attributes them to Stradanus,



Fig. 223. View of the Sala di Ercole in the Quartiere degli Elementi of the Palazzo Vecchio, ca. 1980, with one of the *Story of Hercules* tapestries made for that location

who was subsequently to play a major role in producing cartoons from Vasari's designs.<sup>91</sup> This attribution is likely correct, with the caveat that Vasari also gave the design of the *Jupiter* and *Hercules* cartoons to Stradanus, although documentary evidence indicates that Girolamo Macchietti was paid to carry them out. Stradanus was evidently well established at the Florentine court by 1556, although his name does not appear in documents relating to the Medici until April 1557. He apprenticed under Pieter Aertsen in Antwerp, where he became a master in 1545. During the following ten years Stradanus traveled in Italy, working first in Florence. There he may have collaborated with Salviati on the cartoon for the latter's *Meeting of Dante and Virgil* and perhaps provided designs for a four-piece set of the *Seasons* (North Mymms Park, Hertfordshire, England, and location unknown) in 1550. Stradanus subsequently

moved on to Venice and then Rome, where he worked as an assistant to Salviati for several months. He returned to Florence in the early 1550s. The first of the Palazzo Vecchio sets to which his name can with certainty be linked is a three-piece *Story of Saturn* made for the Terrazzo di Saturno in 1559.<sup>92</sup> A sketch by Vasari for the scene of *Jupiter's Birth* in this group survives in the Albertina, Vienna, while a woven version of the design—either the original tapestry or a later duplicate—recently appeared on the market and is now in a private collection in Vicenza.<sup>93</sup> Comparison of the two examples reveals that Stradanus made many alterations when he adapted Vasari's design for his cartoon, changing dimensions, clothing figures, and translating a sketch conceived in terms of light and shade into a more linear and narrative composition—a process of adaptation we can assume took place whenever he



worked with the master's drawings. Evidently equipped with an understanding of the needs of the weavers from his training in Antwerp, Stradanus rapidly became the principal cartoonist to the ducal workshops, providing them with about twelve sets of cartoons comprising some thirty-four different designs in the following decade or so.<sup>94</sup>

Like the *Moses* and *Furius Camillus* frescoes executed by Bronzino and Salviati during the 1540s, the tapestries and painted decoration of the Quartiere degli Elementi constituted an encomium for Cosimo and the Medici. Much of the iconography is so complex that Vasari felt compelled to provide a written explanation of it. This text, the *Ragionamenti* of 1558, takes the form of a dialogue between the artist and Prince Francesco, Cosimo's son, and treats in detail the resonant parallels between the mythological scenes of the decorations and the achievements and virtues of Cosimo and his ancestors.<sup>95</sup> It should be noted that the *Ragionamenti* does not describe the scheme of the Quartiere degli Elementi as it was realized but rather the ideal cycle envisioned by Vasari, which was never fully accomplished.<sup>96</sup>

Vasari's treatment of tapestries, frescoes, and friezes in the Quartiere degli Elementi as an iconographically and formally unified whole may have been inspired in part by Italian precedents. It is possible that a model was provided by Perino del Vaga's work for Andrea I Doria in Genoa, where the iconography of the tapestries was coordinated with that of the fresco decorations. Another source may have been the decorations in some of the rooms of Ercole d'Este's court at Ferrara, where records reveal that some frescoes and friezes were not painted until certain tapestries were delivered—presumably so they could be brought into harmony.<sup>97</sup> Although we do not know if Vasari looked to these sources, or whether his approach was innovative, we can state with certainty that the scale on which he conceived the coherent, all-surrounding scheme of the Quartiere degli Elementi was entirely unprecedented.

In 1559 Cosimo instructed Vasari to turn his attention to the decorations of the Quartiere di Eleonora. It was probably for a dining room adjacent to this suite that Stradanus carried out cartoons in 1559 for a fourteen-piece set showing the *Life of Man* (completed 1565), of which four panels survive (Deposito del Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa; Victoria and Albert Museum; Mobilier National, Paris; Musée National de la Renaissance, Ecouen). In addition, for the suite itself, Stradanus provided cartoons for a six-piece set of the *Roman Women* (woven in 1562–64), a four-piece set of the *Story of Esther and Ahasuerus* (woven in 1562–64) for the room of this name, and a six-piece set of the *Story of Ulysses* (woven 1563–65) for the Sala di Penelope.<sup>98</sup>

The central painting in the ceiling of this last room, executed by Stradanus, depicts Penelope at her loom and presents a detailed, if stylized, vision of a contemporary tapestry atelier, albeit with women workers rather than men.<sup>99</sup> Stradanus was also responsible for the decorations of the Quartiere di Cosimo, reconstructed between 1559 and 1562: for these he provided designs for a six-piece set of the *Story of David* (for the entrance hall; woven 1561–62), of which one piece and a fragment survive (Palazzo Pitti, Florence); a four-piece set of the *Story of Solomon* (woven 1564–65); two sets of the *Story of Cyrus* with a total of thirteen pieces (woven 1565–67); and two more sets of the *Story of David* (woven 1567–68). The iconography of these groups was appropriate for Francesco, who probably occupied the Quartiere di Cosimo from 1564, when he was appointed regent.<sup>100</sup>

The redecoration of the Quartiere di Leone X, begun in spring 1555, at the same time as the refurbishing of the Quartiere degli Elementi was undertaken, did not include tapestries in the original scheme devised by Vasari, the walls being covered instead with frescoes. However, after the suite was assigned to Cardinal Fernando during the 1560s, numerous tapestries were supplied for these rooms: Stradanus provided designs for a sequence of sets on the theme of the history of the House of Medici (woven between 1569 and 1574). These depicted the *Story of Cosimo il Vecchio*, the *Story of Lorenzo de' Medici*, the *Story of Clement VII*, of which various pieces survive (Palazzo Pitti), the *Story of Giovanni delle Bande Nere*, and the *Story of the Sienese Wars*.<sup>101</sup>

Between 1561 and 1577 Stradanus also executed designs for forty-four *Hunting Scenes* tapestries for more than twenty rooms at the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano. Many of the subjects, which were chosen by Vasari and Borghini, were inspired by classical and medieval hunting treatises, such as Gaston Phébus's *Livre de la chasse* and Domenico Boccamazza's *Trattato della caccia*.<sup>102</sup> The designs were published in engraved form by Philips Galle and other Netherlandish artists, along with an additional sixty-one *Hunting Scenes* that Stradanus executed specifically for reproduction as prints.<sup>103</sup> During the same period the Florentine workshops produced numerous carriage covers and, from 1566, commissions for private individuals.<sup>104</sup>

The extremely intense activity of the mid- to late 1550s and 1560s detailed here equipped the Palazzo Vecchio with suite after suite of brightly colored hangings. While the quality of the tapestries made during this period was not as high as that of the sets of the late 1540s and early 1550s, the effect of the late ensembles, in conjunction with the palace's painted ceilings and friezes, must have been overpowering, an extraordinary display of wealth and

magnificence. Several of the latter series were transferred to the Palazzo Pitti after the move of Cosimo's private apartments there in the later 1550s.<sup>105</sup>

Following the deaths of Cosimo and Vasari, in 1574, the high production rate of the Florentine workshops waned, but these

manufactories continued to carry out tapestries for Francesco, now the grand duke, and for independent patrons, largely from cartoons by Bronzino's pupil, Allori, who took over as chief cartoonist following the departure of Stradanus in 1576. Indeed, the Florentine workshops continued to function until 1745.

1. Forti Grazzini lecture at Mechelen conference, October 12, 2000. See Forti Grazzini 2002, which promises a full bibliography on Italian tapestry production in this era.
2. In writing this text I have depended heavily on studies of the Ferrarese, Florentine, and Mantuan manufactories by Forti Grazzini, Adelson, Meoni, Brown, and Delmarcel. The reader is referred to their excellent publications, cited here and in the bibliography, for more detailed appraisals.
3. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 56.
4. Ibid., pp. 60–80; Forti Grazzini 1990b (with bibliog.). For subsequent bibliography, see Adelson in Grove 1996, vol. 11, p. 5.
5. Orth 1983; Joubert 1987a, pp. 127–33.
6. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 82.
7. Adelson in Grove 1996, vol. 17, p. 812.
8. Meoni 1998, pp. 36, 58, nn. 8–11.
9. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 89.
10. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 61.
11. Humfrey in Grove 1996, vol. 9, pp. 183–87.
12. Forti Grazzini 1990b.
13. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 89, n. 64; C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 84, doc. 6 (with an apparent confusion between Alfonso d'Este, who had died in 1534, and Ercole d'Este).
14. Forti Grazzini 1990b, p. 13.
15. Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 63–64; Cohen 1996, pp. 439–41, 736–37.
16. Delmarcel 1997.
17. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 64.
18. Forti Grazzini 1990b, pp. 13–19.
19. Having been removed to the Este palace in Modena in the 17th century, these four were sold at auction in Paris in 1875. Two of the four were acquired in 1878 by the Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins, subsequently the Musée des Gobelins, Paris, passing in 1946 to the Louvre. A third, formerly in the Briges collection, is now said to be in a private Ferrarese collection, while fragments of the fourth have appeared recently on the art market; Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 65.
20. Gibbons 1966; Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 65–66.
21. Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 68.
22. Ibid.
23. According to Giambattista Giraldi's *Commentario delle cose di Ferrara, et de' principi da Este* (1597), the fortifications shown in the *Città* represented a monument to Ercole's "prudential" (wisdom). Forti Grazzini 1982b, p. 69.
24. Ibid., pp. 70–71.
25. Ibid., pp. 71–72.
26. Ibid., p. 72.
27. Ibid., pp. 72–75.
28. Ibid., pp. 73–75.
29. Ibid., pp. 81, 83–84; Como 1986, pp. 43–47, 57–60.
30. Documentation on weaving activity in Mantua was first brought to light by Braghirolli (1881). Much new material, along with detailed analysis, appears in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996.
31. Adelson 1990, p. 487, doc. 4.
32. Ibid., pp. 494–95, docs. 6, 7; C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 86–89, doc. 9.
33. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 90–94, docs. 12, 13.
34. Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, p. 111; Forti Grazzini 1989, pp. 474–77; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 175–83; Delmarcel 1997, pp. 387–89.
35. Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 176.
36. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 87.
37. Delmarcel in *ibid.*, pp. 175–79.
38. Forti Grazzini 1989, pp. 474–75; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 179.
39. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 95, doc. 17.
40. Adelson 1990, p. 526, doc. 57, believes the trip took place in 1546, as opposed to C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 98, doc. 23, who maintain that it occurred in 1548.
41. Meoni 1998, p. 56.
42. C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 101 doc. 27, 103 doc. 30.
43. Delmarcel in *ibid.*, pp. 206–13, no. 7.
44. Ibid., p. 212.
45. Ibid., p. 211.
46. For detailed analysis of the borders, see *ibid.*, pp. 210–11.
47. Ibid., pp. 206–7.
48. Adelson 1992, pp. 193–94; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 207–8.
49. Numerous documents relating to the production and use of tapestries in Florence survive in the Medici archives. On the basis of these records Adelson established a detailed history of the early years of production in a series of essays (1980, 1983, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c), and in her Ph.D. dissertation (1990). Her groundbreaking work has recently been supplemented by the first of Meoni's catalogues of the tapestry collections in Florentine museums (1998). For ease of reference I here limit my footnotes to Adelson's thesis and Meoni's catalogue, both of which provide extensive guidance to the previous literature.
50. Adelson 1990, pp. 19–20.
51. Ibid., pp. 501–2, doc. 18, 503 doc. 200.
52. "[T]ale arte sarebe di grandissimo momento per chotesta città perchè vi si dilaterbe in modo che vi sarebe perpetua"; Adelson 1990, pp. 23–24, 498–99, doc. 16; Meoni 1998, p. 36.
53. "[I]o tengo certissimo in breve tempo tale arte habia piu a fiorire chosti che in luogo dove la sia"; "ricordando a sua excellentia che in bersellj [Brussels] sono circha quindicimila hominj che lavorono di questo exercitio che per cotesta città [Florence] capacissima di begli ingegni potria molto bene che in breve tempo la si dilatasse tanto che roma e tutto il regno di napoli si fornirebbono di chosti perchè non chosterano piu di quelle di fiandra ma saranno di tanta piu perfezione di disegni che ogni homo le piglera piu volentieri"; Adelson 1990, pp. 24–25, 499–501, doc. 17.
54. "[I]n breve tempo ci si habbi à lavorare di tal sorte che non sarà più necessario alli sudditi di questo stato et alli circumvicini ancora di venir'si a fornisi in Fiandra di Tapezzerie"; *ibid.*, pp. 21–23, 509, doc. 26; Meoni 1998, p. 36.



55. Adelson 1990, p. 83; Meoni 1998, p. 36.
56. Adelson 1990, pp. 41–42; Meoni 1998, pp. 35–36.
57. Meoni 1998, p. 39.
58. “[I]l maestro medesimo non ne resta molto sodisfacto, promettendo di migliorar”; Adelson 1990, pp. 88–102, 517, doc. 40; Meoni 1998, pp. 158–61.
59. Adelson 1990, pp. 45, 349–52; Meoni 1998, pp. 162–67.
60. Adelson 1990, pp. 51–52, 131–37, 355–56; Meoni 1998, pp. 148–51.
61. For discussion of Salviati’s tapestry designs in the context of the rest of his work, see Rome and Paris 1998, *passim*, esp. Adelson’s contribution, pp. 284–305.
62. Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, nos. 113–15; Forti Grazzini 2002.
63. Adelson 1990, pp. 131–39, 357–61; Meoni 1998, pp. 152–54, 156–57.
64. Adelson 1990, pp. 56–65; Meoni 1998, pp. 38–39.
65. Adelson 1990, *passim*, esp. pp. 149–87, 363–90; Forti Grazzini 1994, pp. 16–48; Meoni 1998, pp. 124–41.
66. Adelson 1990, pp. 149–87.
67. Two preliminary sketches for the *Tarquin and Lucretia* series survive (Louvre, Paris; Nationalmuseum, Stockholm); Meoni 1998, pp. 46–47; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, p. 298.
68. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 7, p. 28.
69. Adelson 1990, pp. 179–80.
70. Meoni 1998, p. 44.
71. Adelson 1990, pp. 205–62; Meoni 1998, pp. 172–85.
72. Adelson 1990, pp. 258–59.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81; Meoni 1998, p. 41.
74. Adelson 1990, pp. 76–77; Meoni 1998, p. 56.
75. Meoni 1998, p. 56.
76. Adelson 1990, pp. 120–30; Meoni 1998, pp. 44, 168–69.
77. Adelson 1990, pp. 77–80; Meoni 1998, pp. 43–44.
78. Adelson 1990, pp. 78–79, 263–79; Meoni 1998, pp. 142–47.
79. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, pp. 454–56.
80. Adelson 1990, pp. 420–22, 428–29, 437–44, 456–59; Meoni 1998, pp. 45, 46.
81. Meoni 1998, pp. 47, 52.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–54, 60, n. 88; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, pp. 300–305, nn. 121–24.
83. Meoni 1998, p. 54.
84. Adelson 1990, pp. 30–31.
85. Meoni 1998, p. 44.
86. Adelson 1990, pp. 84–87; Meoni 1998, pp. 63–65.
87. Adelson 1990, pp. 332–36; Meoni 1998, pp. 65–66.
88. Adelson 1990, pp. 342–43; Meoni 1998, pp. 63, 67, 86, n. 32.
89. Meoni 1998, p. 67.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 192–95.
91. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 7, pp. 617–18. For discussion of Stradanus’s tapestry designs in the context of his oeuvre, see Baroni Vannucci 1997, *passim*, esp. pp. 24–29, 333–52.
92. Baroni Vannucci 1997, p. 343.
93. Birke and Kertész 1994, no. 2018; McCullagh and Giles 1997, no. 684; Christie’s, London, September 30, 1999, no. 190.
94. Baroni Vannucci 1997, *passim*, esp. pp. 28–29.
95. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 8, pp. 1–225.
96. Adelson 1985b, pp. 166–67, n. 76.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 170–71, nn. 90, 91.
98. Meoni 1998, pp. 68, 87, n. 49.
99. Baroni Vannucci 1997, pp. 92–93.
100. Meoni 1998, p. 68.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 232–47, nos. 59–68.
102. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.
103. Baroni Vannucci 1997, pp. 29, 244–57, 307–28, 371–88.
104. Meoni 1998, pp. 74–76.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

57.

## Venus, a Satyr, and Playing Putti

*Modello* for a tapestry from the *Puttini*

Giulio Romano, 1539

Pen, brown ink, and brown wash on white paper

35.3 x 37.8 cm (13 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 14 $\frac{7}{8}$  in.)

The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth

Settlement Trustees (107)

PROVENANCE: Possibly in the Nicolas Lanière collection; acquired by Sir Peter Lely; acquired by William, second duke of Devonshire; passed to the heirs of the duke of Devonshire.

REFERENCES: Waagen 1854, vol. 3, p. 355; Hartt 1958, vol. 1, pp. 159–60, 300, no. 217, vol. 2, fig. 354; Panofsky 1969, p. 98, fig. 112; Washington and other cities 1969, no. 37; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 475; Prohaska 1989, pp. 295, 296; Forti Grazzini 1990b, p. 12; Jaffé 1994, p. 106, no. 217; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 174–75, 181, fig. 71.

58.

## The Barque of Venus-Fortune

From a fourteen-piece set of the *Puttini*

Design by Giulio Romano, ca. 1540

Woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Mantua, ca. 1540–45

Wool, silk, and gilt-metal-wrapped thread

369 x 424 cm (12 ft. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. x 13 ft. 11 in.)

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (29a)

PROVENANCE: Ca. 1540–45, made for Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga; 1549, may have been among the sets “woven with gold, silver and silk of many colors” that Ercole hung at the Episcopal Palace, Mantua, for the wedding feast of Francesco III Gonzaga; after 1558, probably used as decoration in the Sala Grande of the cardinal’s palace, Rome; 1563, recorded in the inventory of Ercole’s goods taken after his death; 1563, inherited by Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga; 1574, exhibited by Guglielmo in the Camerone dei Capitani for the visit of Henry III; 1580, hung in private rooms, called Camera dell’Aquila, in the Corte Vecchia; 1584, hung again in the Camerone dei Capitani for marriage of Vincenzo Gonzaga and Eleonora de’ Medici; 1614, 1648, and 1668, recorded in Mantuan court inventories; before 1709, moved to

Venice by Ferdinand Carlo Gonzaga; 1709, recorded in an inventory of Ferdinand Carlo’s goods taken in Venice after his death; 1709, inherited by Leopold I of Lorraine and the set dispersed; 1878, this piece exhibited with three other tapestries and two vertical fragments at the Palais du Trocadero, Paris; Ephrussi collection; Worms collection; Cahen collection; 1920, purchased by Calouste Gulbenkian.

REFERENCES (for the *Puttini* set of tapestries): Darcel 1878, p. 1007; Müntz 1878–85, pp. 61–68; Galerie Georges Petit 1920, no. 43; Göbel 1928, p. 406; Kendrick 1930; Viale Ferrero 1961b, p. 21; Viale Ferrero 1963, p. 42; Nunes Riso Guerreiro 1966, pp. 8–11; Nunes Riso Guerreiro 1970, pp. 234–35; Jarry 1971; Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 67–70, no. 66; Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 76–79, 92–93, pls. 100–134; Viale Ferrero 1982, pp. 133–34; Viale Ferrero 1984, pp. 18–19, no. 2; Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, pp. 110–15; Forti Grazzini 1989, pp. 474–78 (with bibliog.); Pecorari 1989, pp. 418, 421, 424, n. 67; Prohaska 1989, pp. 296–99; Bauer in Vienna 1989, pp. 302–3; Forti Grazzini 1990b, pp. 10–12; Vinti 1995, pp. 42–43; C. M. Brown in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 32, 36, 38, 41; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 174–83, no. 4; Delmarcel 1997, pp. 387–89; Forti Grazzini 2000a, pp. 35–37, 43–44.

59.

## Fortune Leading the Chariot of State

*Modello* for a tapestry portiere

Giulio Romano, ca. 1540

Pen and brown ink and wash with traces of black chalk

42.2 x 28.3 cm (16 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$  in.)

Teyler Museum, Haarlem (A\* 64)

PROVENANCE: Probably collection of Joachim von Sandrart; 1645, probably acquired by Pieter Spiering van Silfvercroon; 1651, probably sold by Spiering to Queen Christina of Sweden; passed by bequest to Cardinal Decio Azzolino; passed by bequest to Marquis Pompeo Azzolino; 1692, sold by Azzolino to Don Livio Odescalchi; 1713, passed by bequest to Baldassare d’Erba Odescalchi; 1790, sold by Odescalchi to Willem Anne Lestevenon, representing the Teyler Foundation; collection of the Teyler Museum, Haarlem.

REFERENCES: Hartt 1958, vol. 1, pp. 253, 308, no. 363, vol. 2, fig. 521; van Regteren Altena 1966, p. 60; Ward-Jackson in London 1970, no. 81; Martineau in London 1981, p. 204, no. 204; Florence and Rome 1983, pp. 154–55, no. 66; Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, pp. 112, 172, fig. 85.

This tapestry and the two drawings by Giulio Romano are from the set known as the *Puttini*, one of the most sumptuous and poetic groups of tapestries executed in Italy during the Renaissance. The fourteen-piece set took its subject from the *Imagines*, a classical Greek text by Philostratus, which described real or imaginary paintings of mythological scenes. The *Puttini* set was most likely woven in Mantua by Nicolas Karcher after cartoons by Giulio Romano for two members of the Gonzaga family. The first pieces were conceived and woven for Federico II Gonzaga, duke of Mantua (1500–1540); following his death, the set appears to have been continued, now in richer materials, for his brother Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga (1505–1563). The tapestries for Ercole, which include the *Barque of Venus-Fortune*, were executed according to the finest standards of the day, with silver- and gold-metal-wrapped weft threads. They have no borders and bear Ercole’s coat of arms at the center top of the scenes. The drawing from Chatsworth representing the goddess Venus, a spying satyr, and playing children is Giulio’s *modello* for one of the tapestries in the original *Puttini* set. The drawing from the Teyler Museum depicting Fortune and the Gonzaga coat of arms, also a *modello* by Giulio for a tapestry, is connected stylistically with the *Puttini* set and may have been a design for one of the overdoors mentioned as part of Ercole’s set in the 1563 inventory of his goods. Iconographically complex, combining political and religious symbolism, the tapestry set was intended to portray the rule of the Gonzaga family in Mantua as a golden age of earthly peace and prosperity, fortune and abundance, while also promoting Christian virtues and the church’s mission to propagate the faith.





*Description of the Drawing "Venus, a Satyr, and Playing Putti"*

This drawing by Giulio Romano represents, at the far right, Venus Genetrix (Maternal Venus) as a personification of Charity. Seated before a grotto under a trellis of roses, she embraces a putto while two others cling to her body. From

behind the grotto wall, a lascivious satyr spies on the innocent group. Under Venus's legs, water gushes from a dolphin's mouth to form the stream that flows across the foreground of the composition. At the left, winged putti play happily. Two catch a snake in the stream while others climb apple trees to pick the abundant

fruit. In the background, more putti gambol and frolic as others fish from a boat. The expansive landscape of hills and trees stretches to a distant town, the buildings of which are sketchily represented.

A tapestry based on the present drawing was first published in 1989 (collection of



Federico Zeri, Mentana, Rome).<sup>1</sup> Woven only with wool and silk, and enclosed by a border bearing the heraldic devices of Federico II Gonzaga it appears to belong to the first group of *Puttini* tapestries designed by Giulio Romano and begun by the weaver Nicolas Karcher for Duke Federico before his death in 1540.

#### Description of the Tapestry

The *Barque of Venus-Fortune* depicts a circular pavilion consisting of a trellis overhung with grapes and pears and supported by ten poles driven into the low water near the edge of a marsh. Five putti are perched on top of the trellis. Two of them shoot arrows, at a bird of paradise and a duck, respectively; another putto, just taking wing at the left, tightly holds a fowling net with small birds inside. Under the lush green dome, a richly carved barque is filled with nine winged putti fishing with a net—two of them holding what seems to be a great sheatfish. A tenth embraces and kisses a beautiful woman who is sitting astern, steering the barque with her left hand on the rudder. She returns the embrace with her right hand. In the background, under a cloudy sky, is the vast, open landscape of the marsh and its shores. At the far right, putti fish from another barque, and at the far left, some cows can be seen. In the center foreground, a winged putto sits on a strip of ground lush with low plants and writes the name of the tapestry's first owner on his quiver: HER[CULES] EPISCOP[US] MAN[TUAE] (Ercole Gonzaga, Bishop of Mantua). At the top center of the tapestry, the coat of arms of the Gonzaga family, flanked by cardinal's bows, refers again to Ercole, who, after becoming bishop of Mantua in 1521, was made a cardinal in 1527.

The tapestry was originally part of a set comprising ten large pieces, two portieres, and two *soprapporte*, of which four complete pieces and two vertical fragments are in the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian: in addition to the *Barque*, these include the *Ball Game*, the *Dance* (fig. 212), and the *Fishermen* and fragments called the *Cat* and the *Dog*.<sup>2</sup> Another vertical fragment from the same group, the *Dance*, is in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan (383).<sup>3</sup>

#### Iconography

The *Puttini* compositions are based on a passage in a classical Greek text, Philostratus's *Imagines* (1.6), which describes an ancient painting of Venus and the erotes. The tapestries, however, multiply and vary the motifs described by the classical author. In 1510, Philostratus's text had been translated from Greek into Latin by Celio Calcagnini in Ferrara, and about 1518–19 Titian had illustrated the passage in his painting the *Worship of Venus*, for Alfonso I d'Este (Prado, Madrid).<sup>4</sup> About the same time, Raphael in Rome produced two drawings on the same theme. Though now lost, these are known through copies and etchings, which depict putti taking part in various activities, including some playful tree climbing (fig. 93).<sup>5</sup> As one of Raphael's followers, Giulio Romano surely knew these designs, which appear to have constituted the main visual source for the *Puttini* drawings and cartoons he made for Nicolas Karcher. They had already been used by Tommaso Vincidor in Brussels, in 1520–21, as a source for single figures and groups of putti in his cartoons for the lost twenty-piece set known as the *Giochi di putti* (see pp. 229–33 and cat. no. 27), commissioned by Pope Leo X for the Sala di Costantino.<sup>6</sup> The winged boys of the Leonine tapestries (shown on small stages, in front of pendentive festoons) and their activities, attributes, and animal companions celebrate the happy age of renewal brought by the Medici pope. Though larger and based on different compositions, the tapestries after Giulio's cartoons have evident connections with Leo X's set: the postures of some figures are repeated from it (or from the common source of Raphael's designs), and, more important, the later works derive from the *Giochi di putti* the idea of using the *Puttini* theme as a metaphor of celebration.

In the drawing of *Venus, a Satyr, and Playing Putti*, Giulio closely follows Philostratus's text, but the sensual detail of the satyr spying on the goddess has a different visual source: either the famous print *Sleeping Nymph Unveiled by a Satyr* in the Aldine edition (Venice, 1499) of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, or the etching *A Sleeping Nymph Nursing Two Children, Spied on by Two Satyrs* by Benedetto Montagna.<sup>7</sup> But Giulio was surely

well acquainted with another possible source: Correggio's painting *Venus, Cupid, and the Satyr* (ca. 1525; Louvre, Paris), then in the Maffei collection in Mantua.<sup>8</sup> After Giulio, the theme of the nude woman watched by a satyr amid a bacchanal of putti was taken up by Perino del Vaga, as can be seen in a drawing in the British Museum.<sup>9</sup>

For the *Barque of Venus-Fortune*, Giulio apparently borrowed from Philostratus and did not follow exactly any specific literary or visual source: the scene seems highly original, and thus it conveys more pointedly the allegorical message devised by the painter, his patrons, and the court advisers who would have invented the iconography for this tapestry and the entire *Puttini* set. In fact, it has been suggested in recent scholarship that the set as Federico II had projected it, with its enchanted arcadian landscape, flowing water, abundant animals and fruits, and lively and energetic putti, would not have been simply the image of a decorative, humanistic paradise, but would have manifested the idea of a golden age of happiness, richness, and abundance brought to Mantua by the Gonzaga rule. The particular character of the city, surrounded by lakes and bathed by the Po River, was reflected in the water-filled landscapes of the tapestries.<sup>10</sup> The same message was surely the basis for the improvement of the set ordered by Ercole Gonzaga, who, as regent of the state, had an interest in enlarging such a splendid show of political propaganda. But it is also probable that for Ercole, as a cardinal and a bishop engaged in the reformation of the church and cultivating for himself the dream of a papal crown, the propagandistic aim of the set would have taken on religious connotations as well: the putti, could be read as personifications of celestial love, the trellis as an allusion to the Eucharist, and the actions of the children as allegorical references to evangelization, the struggle against evil, and the promotion of Christian virtues.<sup>11</sup> The *Barque of Venus-Fortune* tapestry is particularly meaningful from this point of view.

Interpreted until a few years ago as simply a *Barque of Venus*, this tapestry might seem to be only a pagan fantasy and, on the basis of its iconography, a return to the Ship of Venus theme, as represented in one of the tapestries





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from the lost set of the *Grotesques of Leo X* after cartoons by Giovanni da Udine (fig. 88).<sup>12</sup> But, as Delmarcel and Brown have noted, the goddess holding a rudder in Karcher's tapestry would be better considered a personification of Fortune, with that character's traditional attribute. The rudder was, in fact, assigned to Fortune to reinforce her original meaning as an aid in navigation (hence, her placement in

a barque).<sup>13</sup> She, then, has steered the Ship of Love along quiet waters to the protection of a fruit-laden trellis, where fishing and hunting yield abundant rewards. On the shore (inhabited by cranes, which are the traditional symbols of vigilance and *custodia*),<sup>14</sup> the putto writing Ercole's name and the regent's religious charge as bishop suggest the particular involvement of the patron in the scene: he is

the protector of this pleasant barque and the inspirer of Fortune. So the ship may be interpreted here as a symbol either of the state guided to abundance by *bona fortuna* under the regent's direction, or of the church (more specifically, the Mantuan church) driven to its renewal, a spiritual regeneration for which fishing and hunting had been traditional metaphors since Paleo-Christian times. It has

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Detail of cat. no. 58

been rightly noted that the prominence given to the ship, the cranes, and the act of fishing links the *Barque* to the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, one of the tapestries from Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* set for the Sistine Chapel. Those cartoons were designed and painted in Rome in 1515–16 by the master and his workshop, of which Giulio Romano was a relevant member.<sup>15</sup> This may force us to envision the putti of the *Barque* as doubles of the apostles in the *Miraculous Draft*, and we can be certain that Giulio, while projecting his cartoon, had Raphael's image in mind and paid homage to it. It is probable that in both tapestries, the act of fishing carried the same metaphorical

meaning: "fishing for souls," or the propagation of the Word of God and enlargement of the reign of the faith.

#### *Workshop and Date*

Neither the *Barque* nor any of the extant *Puttini* tapestries bears marks or signatures, nor is their production documented, but it is highly probable that they were woven by Nicolas Karcher during his first residence in Mantua (1539–45), not in Ferrara as was suggested in the past. Born in Brussels, Karcher was one of the most skilled tapestry weavers working in Italy during the sixteenth century. He was employed in Ferrara in 1536 by Duke

Ercole II d'Este, together with his brother Jan Karcher and with Jan Rost. But three years later, he moved to Mantua, in the service of Duke Federico II Gonzaga.<sup>16</sup> He is first documented there on October 8, 1539, when he obtained tax exemptions for himself and for his eleven workers. The court would have given him models to be copied for the tapestries, and on November 14, 1539, he was already making the border of a ducal piece. On May 28, 1540, Nicolas was in Casale for family affairs, but surely his manufactory continued the work for the duke, who died on June 28, 1540.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the first of the *Puttini* tapestries, the *Zeri* piece, showing

Federico II's *imprese*, must have been woven in Karcher's workshop between October 1539 and June 1540. Its *modello* in Chatsworth must be dated 1539, as also must be a fragment of the original cartoon by Giulio Romano conserved at the Louvre.<sup>18</sup> The drawing and cartoon offer conclusive evidence that Giulio, the first artist of the Mantuan court and a skilled tapestry cartoonist, had the commission to design the *Puttini*.

#### Patron

The *Puttini* set was begun by Nicolas Karcher for Federico II after Giulio's cartoons, without using metallic weft threads. If all three or four of Karcher's looms (for eleven workers) were devoted to the task at the same time, the workshop could have started weaving two or three other pieces before the death of the duke. Another *Puttini* tapestry of wool and silk, the *Stag*, with the image cut along the upper and lateral edges and inserted in a spurious Netherlandish border, is in London (Victoria and Albert Museum).<sup>19</sup> The scene is copied, with variations, from designs by Giulio Romano in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Nottingham Art Museum, and the Pouncey collection.<sup>20</sup> To the same designs is connected another wool-and-silk *Puttini* tapestry in the collection of the marquis of Northampton at Compton Wynyates, this one completed with a border (not the same as that on the Zeri piece) and bearing the Gonzaga arms.<sup>21</sup> The origin of these two tapestries is still to be clarified: the one in London is presumed to be a replica of a lost piece by Karcher after the original edition. But they (or at least the one in London) might well be other remnants from Karcher's first *Puttini* set for Federico II.

After the death of Duke Federico, his brother Cardinal Ercole, now regent of Mantua, evidently continued the production of the *Puttini* set, but with the addition of metallic weft threads. This followed the technical standards of the best tapestries made in Brussels, of which Ercole was a generous buyer. The four tapestries and three fragments in Lisbon and Milan result from this "second act" of the production of the *Puttini*. No designs or cartoons by Giulio for this second group survive, though the style, form, and brilliant inventions of the woven scenes deter-

mine that he was again the inventor, just as Nicolas Karcher, though unrecorded, was probably their weaver. But when, exactly, were these new tapestries woven? Archival records attest that on July 3, 1541, Ercole had a project under way for new tapestries to be made in Mantua. Nicolas Karcher worked continuously for him during the second half of 1541 and throughout 1542, although the finished pieces mentioned in the documents are only a "woven picture" of *Moses in the Desert* (January 24, 1542) and four portieres (January 28, 1542). After this, no other works by Karcher for Ercole are recorded before the weaver left Mantua for Florence in 1545, though the existence of good relations between the patron and the weaver is demonstrated by a small gift Karcher received from the regent in November 1544.<sup>22</sup> In 1545 the *Puttini* were surely finished, but it is possible that Ercole's tapestries were woven immediately after the first pieces made for Federico II, probably using cartoons already painted by Giulio Romano. It is thus conceivable that the set was completed as early as 1541-42.

#### Description of the Drawing "Fortune Leading the Chariot of State"

In this drawing by Giulio Romano, a personification of Fortune drives a chariot drawn by the four heraldic eagles of the Gonzaga family.<sup>23</sup> She holds a rudder and bears a scroll with the motto *RENOVABITUR UT AQUILAE JUVENTUS* ([T]hy youth is renewed like the eagle's), from Psalm 103. Above the chariot, protecting it, are Ercole's insignia, the Gonzaga coat of arms and a cardinal's hat, both carried by flying putti. The composition is framed by an arched trellis formed on both sides by trees interwoven with vines heavy with grapes. In the background is a wooded, hilly landscape, extending far into the distance. As Delmarcel and Brown have rightly surmised, the ambiguous politico-religious message evident in the *Barque* tapestry, with its image of Fortune steering the metaphorical Ship of Love under the protection of Ercole Gonzaga, is also evident in this composition. Here, too, the Gonzaga rule ushers in a golden age of fortune and plenty, which is "framed" by the Vintage of the Lord (and the Christian church). Stylistically, this drawing, together with a pendant preserved in New York which depicts the chariot driven not by Fortune but by

a putto (fig. 224), appears to be connected with the *Puttini* tapestries.<sup>24</sup> The two designs have long been identified as *modelli* for tapestry cartoons. They might have served as models for a set of twelve lost tapestries called the *Spalliere della Fortuna*, owned by Ercole Gonzaga and made in the Netherlands after designs sent from Mantua;<sup>25</sup> or, alternatively, for the two woven overdoor pieces that, according to the inventory of Ercole's goods taken after his death in 1563, were included in the *Puttini* set.

NELLO FORTI GRAZZINI

1. Forti Grazzini 1989, pp. 475-76; Forti Grazzini 1990b, p. 12; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 174-75, 181, fig. 72; Forti Grazzini 2000a, p. 43.
2. For detailed reproductions of these tapestries, see Forti Grazzini 1982b, pp. 162-88; the best analyses of the pieces are in Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988 and Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 174-83, no. 4.
3. See Viale Ferrero 1984, pp. 17-18, no. 2, pls. 9-12, and Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 174, fig. 79.
4. Wethey 1975, pp. 146-48, no. 13.
5. Quednau in Vatican City 1984, pp. 357-58, no. 135; Cordellier and Py 1992, pp. 334-36.
6. Forti Grazzini 1990a, p. 57 (with bibliog.); Chambonas 1995; T. Campbell 1996; Gnann in Mantua and Vienna 1999, pp. 238-39, nos. 165, 166.
7. Gentili 1980, pp. 65-71, figs. 44, 45.
8. Ekserdjian 1997, pp. 268-74, pl. 280.
9. British Museum, London (1946-7-13-567), ca. 1542-43; Parma Armani in Mantua 2001, p. 309, n. 176.
10. Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 475.
11. Viale Ferrero 1982, pp. 133-34; Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 179-82.
12. See Erkelens 1962a, p. 125; Paris 1965a, no. 28.
13. Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, pp. 112-14; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 179-81, with numerous bibliographic and visual references.
14. Shearman 1972, p. 74.
15. Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, p. 114; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 182.
16. On the matter of Nicolas Karcher's summons to Mantua, it should not be forgotten that his father, Louis, also a tapestry weaver, lived and worked in Casale, Piedmont (where he wrote his will in 1536). That city, which had been under the Paleologhi family (Federico II Gonzaga married Margherita Paleologa), became part of the Gonzaga state in 1533. Also, after going to Florence in 1545 and before returning to Mantua in 1555, Nicolas maintained contacts with the court of the Gonzaga in Mantua, where his children lived under ducal protection.
17. See C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 86-87, doc. 9 (with bibliog.).
18. Louvre, Paris (3566), showing the same image of three putti holding a hare that may be seen in the background of the design in Chatsworth: see Paris 1983a, pp. 52-53, no. 56; Forti Grazzini 1990b, p. 12.





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Fig. 224. *Modello for the Allegory of the Regency of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga*. Giulio Romano, 1540–45. Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, with traces of red chalk at lower edge, 42.7 x 28.8 cm. Private collection, New York

19. See Wingfield Digby 1980, pp. 67–70, no. 66, pl. 94b.

20. British Museum (1928-4-17-5); Victoria and Albert Museum (E 4586-1910); Nottingham Art Museum (91-198); Pouncey collection: see Kendrick 1930; Pouncey and Gere 1962, pp. 67–68; Ward-Jackson 1979, pp. 74–75; Forti Grazzini 1989, pp. 476–77. Another of Giulio's *Puttini* designs for a lost tapestry of the set, retouched by Rubens, is in Copenhagen (see Jaffé 1964–65, p. 390, pls. 17, 18). The theme of the *Puttini* and of the *Children in the Vine* had already been adopted by Giulio and his collaborators for the decoration of rooms of the Palazzo Te: two drawings with putti in a vine by Giulio

Romano (Národní Galerie, Prague), preparatory for ceiling frescoes, are connected with the lost frescoes of the apartment of the Giardino Segreto: see Bazzotti 2000.

21. Kendrick 1930; Wingfield Digby 1980, p. 67.

22. See C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 90–93 doc. 12, 95 doc. 17.

23. See Florence and Rome 1983, pp. 154–55, no. 66; Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, p. 112; Forti Grazzini 1989, p. 478; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 181; M. Schwartz in New York 1999, pp. 72–73.

24. Private collection, New York: see M. Schwartz in

New York 1999, pp. 72–73, no. 16 (with bibliog.).

25. Delmarcel and C. M. Brown 1988, p. 112; Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, p. 181. On the lost set of twelve “spaliere della Fortuna condotta da quattro Aquile” mentioned in Mantuan inventories from 1563 to 1627, see Delmarcel in C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 68–69. The tapestries were of vertical format but small dimensions, so they were also mentioned as “portieres”; as such, they might correspond to the set of twelve portieres Ercole Gonzaga received from Flanders in 1542 (see C. M. Brown and Delmarcel 1996, pp. 93–94, doc. 13).





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## Charity

From a ten-piece set of the *Grotesque Spalliere*  
Design and cartoon by Francesco Ubertini, known as  
il Bachiacca, 1545

Woven in the workshops of Jan Rost (this piece) and  
Nicolas Karcher (other pieces in the set), Florence,  
1546–53

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
227 x 735 cm (7 ft. 5½ in. x 24 ft. 1¼ in.)

9–10 warps per cm

Inscribed with the rebus trademark of Rost: a roast  
on a spit (lower right, above the last fish scroll);

FATTO-IN-FIORENZA (on the left)

Depositi Arazzi, Palazzo Pitti, Florence (Soprintendenza  
per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze, Arazzi 1912–25, 499)

PROVENANCE: July 15, 1549, in the Guardaroba  
(Wardrobe) of Cosimo I de' Medici in the Palazzo  
Vecchio; 1553–1624, in the Palazzo Vecchio, in the  
wardrobe or hanging in the Sala dell'Udienza; 1663,

described as being in the apartment of the grand  
duchess in the Palazzo Pitti; 1720, 1769, 1804–16,  
recorded in inventories of the Guardaroba Generale of  
the Palazzo Vecchio; 1882 to 1922, exhibited in the Regia  
Galleria degli Arazzi, Florence; 1956, hung in the Museo  
di Palazzo Davanzati; 1998, moved to the Depositi  
Arazzi (Tapestry Depositories) of the Palazzo Pitti.

REFERENCES: Conti 1875, pp. 14–15, 48–50; Rigoni 1884,  
pp. 7–10, 73 doc. 2, 85 doc. 5, 87 doc. 6; Tinti 1920–21;  
Tinti 1925, pp. 8–11, 19–22, 29–31; M. Viale in Turin  
1952, pp. 79, 82; Amsterdam 1955, p. 158; Viale Ferrero  
1963, pp. 76–77; Adelson 1980, pp. 141–200, doc. 6;  
Adelson in Florence 1980a, pp. 47–50; Adelson 1983,  
pp. 907–8, 912–13; Adelson 1990, pp. 47–55, 71–87,  
205–62, 391–405; Meoni 1998, pp. 41–45, 57, 172–85, 174,  
no. 24; Meoni 2000, p. 236.

CONDITION: Good. The high percentage of silk makes

the fabric fragile. The tapestry was restored in 1998–2001  
in Padua.

*Charity* is one of ten tapestries of the *Grotesque Spalliere*, all still extant, which Duke Cosimo I de' Medici commissioned for the decoration, on special occasions, of the lower portion of the walls of the Sala dell'Udienza (Audience Hall) in the Palazzo Vecchio.<sup>1</sup> The series was woven from cartoons by Francesco Bachiacca, in the workshops of Jan Rost and Nicolas Karcher between 1546 and 1553.<sup>2</sup> The kaleidoscopic imagery of the set is replete with Medici emblems and secular and Christian allegories containing a variety of fish and animals. One of the first works of the nascent Florentine tapestry manufactories of Jan Rost and Nicolas





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Karcher, the *Grottesque Spalliere* continues the theme of fanciful figures and motifs based on the antique that had become so popular in tapestry design since their first introduction in the borders for Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* (1515–16). The subject is interpreted playfully with allusions to such Medicean emblems as goats, referring to Cosimo I de' Medici's ascendant sign of Capricorn; the peacock, symbol of Juno, a reference to Cosimo's wife, Eleonora di Toledo; and the Virtues personified, attributes of the duke, alongside elegant figural representations *all'antica*. The degree of naturalism with which fish and animals are represented and the scale in which they are depicted, put a new stamp on the imagery of grotesques.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Description and Iconography*

The figure of Charity in the tapestry's central medallion has the classic attributes of this Virtue. The manner in which she is represented—standing on a cloud—would be used again later in Medici tapestry production in allegories of Fortune and Justice woven between 1590 and 1605 from designs by Alessandro Allori.<sup>4</sup> On either side of the medallion, two hybrid creatures that terminate in dentellate seashells atop two dogs' heads recall conceits in prints by Jean Mignon and Antonio Fantuzzi, both of the school of Fontainebleau.<sup>5</sup> The crowned Medici-Toledo crest appears below a canopy from which falls a sky blue drapery gathered on the sides and in the lower part and which creates a kind of niche of fabric

enfolded the entire central scene. Below, two sphinxes recall elements of prints by Domenico del Barbieri, active at Fontainebleau from 1539 to 1565.<sup>6</sup> A number of subsidiary decorative elements are arranged on either side of the central cartouche. Moving away from the center, one encounters two lozenges containing birds, flanked by burning censers. Beyond these, two whimsical plinths, populated by a porcupine and a pig on one side and a goat and a dog on the other, support two fanciful stages on each of which are two small female figures, one of whom is weaving a crown of flowers. Above each stage is a sphere of water, with a fish in the one on the right and an eel in the one on the left. Beyond them are two more censers. At either end of the tapestry, under a half-canopy





Detail of cat. no. 60

of red drapery and inside a large dentellate seashell, a cherub rests its foot atop the head of a fantastical fish. When the series is hung in sequence, the half-canopies represented at the far ends of some of the tapestries come together to form a whole with the adjacent weaving.

Although these decorative elements were novel in their manner of conception, the idea behind them may nevertheless derive from the frescoes in the Sala di Costantino at the Vatican, where there are portraits of popes sitting under round canopies inside trompe l'oeil niches at the far ends of the walls. This echo of a decorative project commissioned by Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici) and executed by Raphael's

workshop corresponds above all to Cosimo I's desire and intent to reaffirm a continuity with the great figures of his bloodline.<sup>7</sup>

The garlands across the top of *Charity* and the animals and lozenge shapes with fish running along the entire lower edge seem derived from prints by Domenico del Barbieri.<sup>8</sup> Other important sixteenth-century Roman precedents also come to mind, such as the lost paintings of Giovanni da Udine's *Aviary* for Leo X or the same artist's more famous grotesques of "fishes and animals of the water" for the Vatican Loggia, or those for the loggia of the Palazzo Medici in Via Larga, Florence, also lost.<sup>9</sup>

The real novelty of Bachiacca's grotesques lies in the realistic manner with which various species of fish in the borders and the birds and other animals above them are depicted, as if prepared for a scientific manual. This particular skill on the painter's part may have been a deciding factor for Cosimo I in awarding the commission; his passion for the natural sciences is evidenced by the botanical and medical treatises he took delight in consulting during this period. The republication of Pliny's *Natural History* in Cristoforo Landino's translation was revised in 1543 by Antonio Brucioli, and the *Five Books of Medicinal History and Matter of Dioscorides*, in which Cosimo had a very keen



interest, had been translated by Andrea Mattioli in 1544. Bachiacca's oil-painted wall decoration for Cosimo's study in the mezzanine of the Palazzo Vecchio—unfortunately barely legible today—features animals praised as “alive” by the historian and humanist Benedetto Varchi in 1546, because of their fidelity to nature; this decoration is from the same years as the *Grotesque Spalliere*.<sup>10</sup> The sources were indubitably given to Bachiacca by Cosimo himself, since on July 25, 1553, the painter returned to the duke a cartoon “of a fishing haul, to be woven,” as well as “two books of portraits of various fishes and animals and two large sheets and two fishes and two portraits of animals.”<sup>11</sup> Subjects of this sort seem suited above all to banquets, the occasion for which the tapestries were intended.

#### Commission

The *Grotesque Spalliere* formed part of a comprehensive project for decorating the Sala dell'Udienza, which began with Francesco Salviati's frescoes depicting Furius Camillus, completed in September 1545. The decorative project also included the lost stained-glass windows by Battista dal Borro d'Arezzo featuring the armorial bearings of Cosimo I and Emperor Charles V.<sup>12</sup> The ultimate goal of glorifying the figure of Duke Cosimo I and his bloodline as well as Bachiacca's and Salviati's use of some of the same iconographic sources—such as the prints of the school of Fontainebleau—help give the room's decoration as a whole a sense of harmony.<sup>13</sup>

Cosimo seems already to have decided upon the weaving of the *Grotesque Spalliere* and the *Story of Joseph* (see cat. no. 62) by August 28, 1545, shortly after the arrival in Florence of the tapestry weaver Jan Rost. On this date the duke ordered that measurements be taken not only of the Sala dei Duecento—for which the *Joseph* tapestries were destined—but also of the “sala dove si fanno li pasti” (hall in which meals are taken), identified as the Sala dell'Udienza, where the *Spalliere* were to be hung.<sup>14</sup> These are, in any case, the only series described in the inventories of 1549 and 1550, the first to include the works commissioned from Rost and Karcher.<sup>15</sup> The hall in the Palazzo Vecchio for which Salviati's frescoes were commissioned had been destined for use for Audiences of Justice by the government of the Florentine republic.<sup>16</sup> This does not preclude the room being used also for banquets with illustrious

guests, as the August 28 document suggests.<sup>17</sup> Adelson proposed that the tapestries were made for the *zoccoli* (lower sections) of the walls, beneath Salviati's frescoes of *Furius Camillus*, a conclusion she reached by comparing the dimensions of the tapestries with those of the hall.<sup>18</sup> This is confirmed by the inventory compiled between July 3 and 9 of 1574, in which it is noted that they “parano dalla pittura in giù” (extend from the painting down).<sup>19</sup> The preciousness of the materials used did not allow them to be hung in the hall for long periods, and thus they must have been conceived to adorn it only on important occasions. Indeed, inventories record them almost always in the cabinets of the palazzo's wardrobe.<sup>20</sup>

#### Cartoonist and Weaver

Francesco Ubertini, known as il Bachiacca (1494–1557), author of the cartoons for the *Grotesque Spalliere*, was assigned the task as early as October 6, 1545, when he negotiated the terms under which he was to make the cartoons for the set. It is likely, as the ducal commission to the Rost and Karcher workshops attests, that the painter started with the larger, more important pieces in the series—such as those depicting the figures of Charity and Fortune (?) in the center—which were the only ones that would include the crowned Medici-Toledo coat of arms over the central medallion. *Charity* was woven by Rost, whose rebus trademark—a roast on a spit—can still be seen today in the lower right-hand corner. In the list of tapestries commissioned from Rost up to July 15, 1549, it can be identified with the fourth one described, “la charità,” the measurements of which coincide with those of the *spalliera* mentioned in the list of completed tapestries drawn up on September 27, 1553.<sup>21</sup> Smyth's hypothesis concerning the chronology of the weaving of the *Story of Joseph* set was based on the way the emblem of the city of Florence appears in the selvages—initially it was written in full, and later it was abbreviated. This led Adelson to conclude that the *Charity* and *Fortune* (?) panels of the *Grotesque Spalliere*, which are inscribed FATTO IN FIRENZA, were the first of the series to be woven.<sup>22</sup> The abbreviated emblem seems to occur after October 1546, so these two pieces may already have been executed by this date.<sup>23</sup> The figure of Charity was inspired by that in *Abundance* (*Dovizia*) (fig. 216), the portiere

designed by Bronzino that was woven by Rost to demonstrate to Cosimo his technical expertise and that was probably the first tapestry woven in the Florentine workshop. This appears to further confirm the attribution of an early date to *Charity*.

In the absence of specific documentation on the commissioning of each piece in the set, the only certain dates are those of the reports provided to Cosimo in 1549, 1550, and 1553, in which are listed the tapestries that Rost and Karcher had woven for the duke's wardrobe from the start of their activity in Florence up until each of these dates. However, based on information in these documents and on comparisons of the measurements of the *Grotesque Spalliere* with the space of the Sala dell'Udienza, the order in which the cartoons were probably painted would follow approximately the arrangement of the series, which begins with *Charity*, to the left of the eastern door leading into the Sala dei Gigli, and ends with *Fortune* (?), to the right of the same door.<sup>24</sup>

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1. The set of ten *Grotesque Spalliere* belongs to the Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici of Florence. Since 1933, six of them have been with the Italian Embassy in London and currently hang in the ambassador's residence.
2. Adelson 1990, pp. 205–18. This scholar's extensive studies on the early years of tapestry manufacture in Florence, published in various essays in the 1980s, culminated in her 1990 Ph.D. thesis, to which I refer here.
3. Meoni 1998, pp. 172–85; Meoni 2000, p. 236.
4. Meoni 1998, pp. 432–35 nos. 185–87, 460–61 no. 198.
5. Adelson 1990, p. 251.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 255–62.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 248–49.
9. Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, pp. 553–57; Vasari 1568 (1966–87 ed.), vol. 5, pp. 449–52.
10. Vossilla 1993, pp. 382–86.
11. “[D]i una pescagione, per tesser”; “Il libri di ritratti di varii pesci et animali et dua fogli grandi et 2 pesci et 2 animali ritratti”; Meoni 1998, p. 172.
12. Adelson 1990, pp. 208–9.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 246–52.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–48.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 579–81, doc. 141.
16. Cecchi in Allegri and Cecchi 1980, pp. 40–44.
17. Meoni 1998, p. 172.
18. Adelson 1990, pp. 206–7.
19. Meoni 1998, p. 172.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Adelson 1990, pp. 213–16.
22. Smyth 1971, pp. 98–99.
23. Adelson 1990, pp. 52–53, 215–16.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–87, 215–18; Meoni 1998, pp. 172–73.

## Justice Liberating Innocence

Design and cartoon by Agnolo Bronzino, early 1546  
Woven in the workshop of Jan Rost, Florence, before April 22, 1546  
Wool, silk, and silver and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
247 x 170 cm (8 ft. 1 1/4 in. x 5 ft. 7 in.)  
7–9 warps per cm  
Inscribed with Rost's mark, a roast on a spit (outer margin of lower border on right)  
Depositi Arazzi, Palazzo Pitti, Florence (Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze, Arazzi 1912–25, 539)

PROVENANCE: April 22, 1546, delivery of the portiere to Cosimo de' Medici's Guardaroba at the Palazzo Ducale (known as the Palazzo Vecchio from 1549); 1548–74, recorded in the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Vecchio; 1638, 1663, 1688, in the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Pitti and occasionally hung; 1761, recorded in the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Pitti; 1882–1922, exhibited in the Regia Galleria degli Arazzi, and, after its closing, transferred to the Palazzo Pitti, where it was hung in the royal apartments in the Galleria Palatina; 1980, in the Depositi Arazzi of the Palazzo Pitti.

REFERENCES: Conti 1875, p. 50; Müntz 1878–85, pp. 66, 94; Rigoni 1884, pp. 61–62, 73, 85; Venturi 1901–40, vol. 9, pt. 6, pp. 53, 70; Göbel 1928, p. 382; McComb 1928, pp. 25, 165; Berenson 1936, p. 98; Panofsky 1939, pp. 84–86; Smyth 1955, pp. 66–67, 173–74, 271–72; Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 29; Panofsky 1962, pp. 84–91; Berenson 1963, pp. 1, 42; Viale Ferrero 1963, pp. 27–28, 63; Heikamp 1968, pp. 23, 25; Heikamp 1969, pp. 34, 36, 62, 69; Cox-Rearick 1971, pp. 8, 13; Forster 1971, p. 65; Smyth 1971, pp. 20, 26–27, 54, 67–68, 71, 87–92, 100; Panofsky 1975, pp. 114–32; Monbeig-Goguel 1976; Gaeta Bertelà 1980, p. 138; Gaeta Bertelà in Florence 1980b, p. 85, no. 121; Viale Ferrero 1982, p. 139; Adelson 1983, p. 905; Bosch 1983; Cox-Rearick 1984, pp. 285–86; Cox-Rearick 1989, pp. 44, 49; Adelson 1990, pp. 99–101, 113–19, 128, 180, 182, 258, 329, 349–51; Calvesi 1992; Meoni 1998, pp. 162–64; D. Parker 2000, pp. 130–31, 145–47.

CONDITION: Fair. The tapestry was extensively restored in 1975–76 in Florence.

The portiere of *Justice Liberating Innocence* is the second tapestry woven by Jan Rost from a cartoon by Bronzino for the ducal wardrobe of Cosimo I de' Medici, where it was delivered on April 22, 1546.<sup>1</sup> It seems to have been conceived as a counterpart to another portiere, *Spring* (fig. 217), by the same artist and workshop.<sup>2</sup> The fact that *Justice Liberating Innocence* was sent to Rome, along with a panel from a set of the *Months*, to showcase Rost's skill to Pope Paul IV, gives us a sense of how prized this portiere has

been since the time it was made.<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps one of the best-known and appreciated works of Florentine tapestry production. Art historians, starting with Panofsky and continuing up to the most recent studies, have for the most part focused on its allegorical meaning. Its erudite and not entirely decipherable symbolism reflects the inventions and tastes of *la Maniera*, in which ambiguous meanings, both political and philosophical, are intertwined.<sup>4</sup>

### Description and Iconography

According to Panofsky, the tapestry shows Justice, represented by a woman holding a sword and scales, rescuing Innocence, a kneeling female figure. Innocence is being menaced by the powers of evil, symbolized by four animals, a snake, lion, dog, and wolf, which, in accordance with the interpretation in Cesare Ripa's 1603 *Iconologia*, represent, respectively, Perfidy, Rage, Envy, and Avarice. Behind Innocence is Time, a bearded old man with wings and an hourglass on his shoulder, who seizes and removes the veil from a young woman who is identified as the personification of Truth.

Panofsky also connected the subject represented with the description by Lucian of the famous *Calumny* by the Greek painter Apelles.<sup>5</sup>

Because the borders and dimensions of this portiere are identical to those of *Spring*, many scholars previously believed that *Justice Liberating Innocence* was conceived as a pendant to *Spring*.<sup>6</sup> Panofsky, however, pointed out the compositional and iconographical inconsistencies between them and suggested that the two pieces were instead conceived as the first of two distinct sets, one of moral allegories and the other of the seasons. He postulated that aside from *Justice Liberating Innocence*, an *Allegory of Love and Time*, which was never realized, was also to have belonged to the first series, and that the painting by Bronzino of this allegory in the National Gallery of London might have derived from a cartoon that was never woven. (According to Panofsky, the painting was supposedly sent in 1545 as a gift from Cosimo to the French king, Francis I.<sup>7</sup> Forster, on the other hand, maintains that it was given to Henry II in 1548.)<sup>8</sup>

The identification of the four figures as Justice, Innocence, Time, and Truth is no longer questioned by art historians, but the symbolism of the four animals, along with the general meaning of the composition, has been variously interpreted as possibly a glorification of Cosimo I and the Medici dynasty or a counterpart to *Spring*. Bosch, in her rereading, rejects the interpretation propounded by Panofsky and his adherents, which takes Ripa's codification of symbolic meanings—with its implicit Christian values—as its point of departure, considering it inconsistent with Cosimo I's humanistic culture. (The possible influence of the Council of Trent (1545–63), which Bosch does not discuss, may not yet have left any mark on Cosimian iconography.) As alternative sources, Bosch suggests a number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century iconographical texts, including the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499) and the *Hieroglyphica* of Valerian (1556), or those of Giraldo (*De deis gentium*, 1548), Conti (*Mythologiae*, 1551) and Cartari (*Immagini*, 1556), while proposing that the subject might have



Fig. 225. *Modello for Justice Liberating Innocence*. Bronzino, ca. 1545–46. Ink and brown wash over black chalk heightened with white, on paper, 31.8 x 21.8 cm. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan (Resta Codex, fol. 61)





been taken from the second-century *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius. She interprets the snake as a conceit of Time, with Truth as his daughter and the other three animals manifestations of Time: past, present, and future. The rescue of Innocence by Justice thus signifies a love of Justice. *Justice Liberating Innocence*, if seen as alluding to the just government instituted by Cosimo following that of his tyrannical predecessor Alessandro de' Medici, and perhaps also to his victory in the battle of Montemurlo, can be associated with the symbolic meaning of Spring. Beyond the recurring Medicean theme of a new golden age, the *Spring* portiere may also hint at the birth of Cosimo I's son and heir, Francesco I, in the spring of 1541. The two portieres' association with strictly Medicean themes, emphasized by the Medici-Toledo arms on their borders, certainly supports the assumption that they were conceived as companion pieces.<sup>9</sup> The portiere of *Spring* was delivered on May 15, 1546, less than a month after the *Justice* portiere.<sup>10</sup> Finally, it is to be noted that the borders seem to have been inspired by the prints of Antonio Fantuzzi drawn from the works of the school of Fontainebleau.<sup>11</sup>

Recently Parker has revived Panofsky's earlier interpretation in the context of a study aimed more at analyzing Bronzino's universe of expression than the iconography of one work.<sup>12</sup>

#### Commission

The original destination of this portiere, which Rost delivered to the Medici wardrobe on April 22, 1546, is unknown.<sup>13</sup> As one of the first tapestries woven at the newly instituted Florentine tapestry works, it was probably commissioned, together with its counterpart *Spring*, to cover a door in one of the rooms of the

Palazzo Vecchio, which was being redecorated at the behest of Cosimo I.

#### Cartoonist and Workshop

The "portiera" with "l'Innocenza del Bronzino"—as the July 15, 1549, inventory calls it—has always been identified with the one under discussion.<sup>14</sup> As the second tapestry woven at the Florentine tapestry works, it allows us to note an early change in the style of Agnolo di Cosimo Tori, known as il Bronzino (1503–1572) from the first portiere, *Abundance* (*Dovizia*) (fig. 216): there is a return to the foreground of broad surfaces featuring extremely minute details found in his paintings such as the frescoes of the chapel of Eleonora di Toledo in the Palazzo Vecchio, executed just prior to this tapestry, or in the *Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time* (National Gallery, London).<sup>15</sup> The shift in style is probably a reconsideration of the painter's initial approach to an artistic medium, tapestry, which was new to him.

A preparatory drawing, in reverse, for this portiere was identified by Heikamp in the Resta Codex of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan (fig. 225). Smyth dated the drawing to about late 1545 or early 1546.<sup>16</sup> There are, however, two other drawings of the exact same subject, also in reverse, at the British Museum. The first, a pencil and black chalk sketch with bister highlights on blue paper (1895.9.15.559), attributed to Bronzino by Robinson, was later assigned to the hand of a pupil or collaborator of his.<sup>17</sup> The other is a finished drawing—in pen and brown ink, watercolor, and bister on blue paper, with a piece of Justice's clothing inserted on a fragment of white paper (1943.11.13.3)—which Smyth maintains is a faithful copy of the Bronzino drawing in Milan. In any case, it is similar in technique, support, and dimensions

to that work (32.6 x 21.5 cm for the London drawing; 31.8 x 2.8 cm for the Milan drawing).<sup>18</sup>

Monbeig-Goguel does not discuss the two London drawings, but she is not entirely convinced of the attribution of the Resta Codex study, in which she finds a certain stiffness of contour. She suggests that the model may be instead a drawing in the Uffizi by Salviati (Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, 1366 F), to whom Annibale Caro, poet and secretary to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, may have proposed the subject.<sup>19</sup> Cox-Rearick has pointed out that the head of Innocence is derived from a drawing, now in a private English collection, which Bronzino used as a model for other works as well. For instance, it appears in the tapestry *Joseph Being Sold by His Brothers* as a male head in the foreground.<sup>20</sup>

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1. Smyth 1955, p. 271; Smyth 1971, p. 92.

2. Meoni 1998, pp. 166–67, no. 21.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

4. Panofsky 1939, pp. 84–86.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

6. See note 2; Müntz 1878–85, p. 66; Göbel 1928, p. 382.

7. Panofsky 1939, pp. 83–91.

8. Forster 1971, p. 65, n. 1.

9. Bosch 1983.

10. Smyth 1955, p. 271; Smyth 1971, p. 92.

11. Adelson 1990, p. 351.

12. D. Parker 2000, pp. 130–31, 145–47.

13. Smyth 1955, p. 271; Smyth 1971, p. 92.

14. Rigoni 1884, p. 73, doc. 2.

15. Viale Ferrero 1961a, p. 29; Adelson 1990, pp. 99–101, 113; see also the discussion of the Florentine tapestry works above, pp. 495–96.

16. Heikamp 1968, pp. 23, 25, fig. 3; Smyth 1971, p. 27.

17. Robinson 1869, p. 50; Robinson 1876, p. 46; Smyth 1971, pp. 67–68; Adelson 1990, p. 351.

18. Smyth 1971, pp. 67–68.

19. "[U]ne certaine raideur des contours"; Monbeig-Goguel 1976, pp. 33, 34, 37, fig. 1.

20. For the drawing and references to other works by Bronzino, see Edinburgh 1969, p. 8, no. 16, fig. 50. See also Adelson 1990, p. 351.



## Joseph Is Recognized by His Brothers

From a twenty-piece set of the *Story of Joseph*  
Design and cartoon by Agnolo Bronzino, with the  
collaboration of Raffaellino dal Colle, 1549/50  
Borders designed by Agnolo Bronzino with the collabo-  
ration of Lorenzo Zucchetti and Alessandro Allori  
Woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Florence,  
1550–53  
Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
556 x 450 cm (18 ft. 2 7/8 in. x 14 ft. 9 1/8 in.)  
7–8 warps per cm  
Depositi Arazzi, Palazzo Pitti, Florence (Soprintendenza  
per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze, Arazzi 1912–25, 724)

PROVENANCE: September 27, 1553, recorded for the  
first time in the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Vecchio,  
Florence; from 1553, in the Guardaroba of the Palazzo  
Vecchio or hung in the Sala dei Duecento; 1638, exhib-  
ited in the Palazzo Pitti; 1663, 1688, 1761, recorded in  
inventories of the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Pitti;  
from 1872, exhibited in the Sala dei Duecento, Palazzo  
Vecchio; 1983, underwent restoration in the Palazzo  
Vecchio; 1999–2000, after restoration, kept in the labora-  
tory of the Palazzo Vecchio; 2001, transferred to the  
Depositi Arazzi, Palazzo Pitti.

REFERENCES: Vasari 1568 (1906 ed.), vol. 6, pp. 283–84,  
vol. 7, pp. 28–29, 599; Vasari 1568 (1966–87 ed.), vol. 5,  
pp. 330–31; Gaye 1839–40, vol. 2, pp. 368–69, doc. CCLVIII;  
Conti 1875, pp. 12–15, 38, 48–49, 57, 89–90, 97–101; Müntz  
1878–85, pp. 35, 63–66; Rigoni 1884, pp. 73–76 docs. 2, 3,  
84–88; Geisenheimer 1909; Göbel 1928, pp. 378–79; M.  
Viale in Turin 1952, p. 78; Cox-Rearick 1964, pp. 80, 81,  
86, 315–16; Heikamp 1968, p. 22; Smyth 1971, pp. 20–27;  
Baccheschi 1973, pp. 96–98; Adelson 1980, p. 152; Adelson  
in Florence 1980a, pp. 50–63; Gaeta Bertelà 1980, p. 138;  
McCorquodale 1981, pp. 101–4; G. Smith 1982; Viale  
Ferrero 1982, pp. 138–39; Adelson 1985a; Adelson 1985b,  
pp. 149, 152, 156–60, 163, 165, 167, 173–77; Adelson 1985c,  
pp. 4, 7, 8, 17; Monaci 1985; Adelson 1990, pp. 45–47, 49,  
52–55, 69–79, 149–204, 320–21, 329, 332, 341–42, 363–90;  
Cox-Rearick 1993, pp. 160, 291–92; Forti Grazzini 1994,  
vol. 1, pp. 16–48; Meoni 1998, pp. 124–41; Meoni 2000,  
pp. 234–37; D. Parker 2000, pp. 159–62.

CONDITION: Good. The tapestry was restored  
between 1983 and 1999 in Florence.

The tapestry *Joseph Is Recognized by His Brothers*  
belongs to the set the *Story of Joseph* that is  
considered one of the masterpieces of Italian  
tapestry production.<sup>1</sup> This unique twenty-piece  
set was woven between 1545–46 and 1553 in  
the workshops of the Netherlandish masters  
Jan Rost and Nicolas Karcher from cartoons  
painted by the finest Florentine painters of the

epoch: Pontormo, Bronzino, and Francesco  
Salviati. Commissioned by Duke Cosimo I de'  
Medici to decorate the Sala dei Duecento in  
the Palazzo Ducale (known as the Palazzo  
Vecchio from 1549), the former seat of the  
Council of the Florentine Republic, it was  
conceived to provide an all-surrounding deco-  
rative scheme for the walls of the room. The  
biblical theme of Joseph, who was betrayed by  
his brothers but who became their benefactor  
(Genesis 37–50), is here a metaphor for the  
Medici, who were forced to leave Florence  
only to return in triumph. The set comple-  
ments the iconographic program for the deco-  
ration of the ducal palace begun a few years  
earlier with the *Story of Moses*, painted in  
fresco by Bronzino in the chapel of Eleonora  
di Toledo, Cosimo's wife, and the frescoes  
depicting the story of Furio Camillus by  
Francesco Salviati in the Sala dell'Udienza.<sup>2</sup>  
It reflects a remarkable harmonizing of the  
tapestry medium with pictorial art, perhaps  
due to the close supervision of the design by  
the artists at every phase of production. The  
quality of the color and materials is height-  
ened by the use of the most refined weaving  
techniques, which result in a virtuoso transla-  
tion of the design into the tapestry medium.

### Description and Iconography

*Joseph Is Recognized by His Brothers* has been  
identified as the piece described in the 1553  
inventory as a “Panno della recognitione di  
Josef doppo el co[n]vito” (Panel of the recog-  
nition of Joseph after the feast). It was proba-  
bly the sixteenth in the narrative sequence of  
the set and placed second from the left on the  
northern wall of the Sala dei Duecento.<sup>3</sup>

Of use in identifying the subject—not a  
straightforward issue—is documentation indi-  
cating the order in which the pieces were  
woven. This was discovered by Adelson in the  
September 27, 1553, inventory of works woven  
up to that date by Rost and Karcher, including  
the *Story of Joseph*; in the list the tapestries are  
numbered. The fifteenth tapestry in the narrative  
sequence, which, according to Smith, depicted  
Joseph revealing his identity to his brothers,

was interpreted by Adelson to be Judah asking  
for Benjamin's freedom. She therefore pro-  
posed that the present tapestry, which Smith  
had generically identified as Joseph asking his  
brothers' forgiveness, was more likely a repre-  
sentation of one of two other events: Joseph's  
lament over his brothers (Genesis 45:4–8) or  
Joseph recognized by his brothers (Genesis  
45:15). The latter seems the more convincing.<sup>4</sup>

The use of Genesis as the source for the set's  
iconography was, according to Smith, filtered  
through a first-century treatise by Philo Judaeus,  
available in sixteenth-century Florence, in which  
the story of Joseph is interpreted as an alle-  
gory of the education of a statesman. Of the  
three periods into which the story of Joseph is  
divided (childhood, the tribulations in Egypt,  
and the ministry in Egypt)—a story that here  
served as a metaphor of the life of Cosimo I—  
it is the final phase that is favored in the tapes-  
try cycle, with twelve scenes out of twenty  
encompassing Joseph's triumph at the court of  
the pharaoh, his reconciliation with his broth-  
ers, and the arrival of his father in Egypt. The  
episode under discussion here is part of this  
group, which is devoted to exalting Joseph's  
gifts as a powerful ruler but also as a clement,  
magnanimous benefactor toward his repentant  
brothers, who serve as metaphors for the  
Florentines hostile to the Medici family but  
who were later won over by Cosimo's good  
government. The subject of this tapestry must  
have had strong allegorical significance for the  
Medici family, since it had already been repre-  
sented, as is made clear by the inscription EGO  
SUM IOSEPH FRATER VESTER (I am Joseph your  
brother [Genesis 45:4]) on a medal struck for  
Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici) in 1529  
or 1530, during the family's exile from Florence.<sup>5</sup>  
The celebration of ruling figures through the  
use of personages drawn from the biblical and  
Greco-Roman worlds was in vogue in the courts  
of Europe, which always remained a reference  
point for Cosimo I.<sup>6</sup>

Even in the borders, which are similar in all  
the tapestries of the set, there are elements  
celebrating Cosimo's ducal reign as a renewed  
golden age for the city of Florence and for his



Detail of cat. no. 62

bloodline. Allusions to this, according to Cox-Rearick, can be seen in the rams' heads at the bottom of the side pilasters, a reference to the astrological sign occurring in spring and symbolizing the rebirth of nature after winter. The goats' heads at the center of the upper border represent Cosimo's customary emblem, Capricorn, his ascendant astrological sign. The exuberant festoons of fruit and vegetables and the animals and birds, domesticated and wild, suggest an allegory of plenitude linked to the duke's new government.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Commission*

Cosimo I had decided to have the *Story of Joseph* woven as of August 28, 1545, when, upon Rost's arrival in Florence, he ordered measurements taken of the Sala dei Duecento. Already between late September and early October 1548, six tapestries of the series had been reinforced with bands of fabric and lined with a view to their being used in the course of a diplomatic journey to Genoa to meet Prince Philip of Spain. By August 3, 1549, ten tapestries of the set had been completed.<sup>8</sup> *Joseph Is Recognized by His Brothers*, however,

belongs to the last group of tapestries to be woven, for it is first described in the 1553 inventory, which lists all the panels of the *Story of Joseph*.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Cartoonist and Workshop*

*Joseph Is Recognized by His Brothers* is one of the seven pieces of the *Joseph* set that were woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, although no documents from Karcher relating to its commission have ever been found. Its first mention, on September 17, 1553, indicates that it was completed sometime between this date and the











date of the previous inventory, February 6, 1550.<sup>10</sup> Nor has any document been found concerning the commission of the cartoon, unanimously held to be by Agnolo Bronzino.<sup>11</sup> Payments for the series were made out to Bronzino's workshop, and they mention materials used and collaborators, among whom are listed Raffaellino dal Colle, Alessandro Allori, and Lorenzo Zucchetti. Raffaellino, whose help Bronzino had requested to speed up the execution of the cartoons for the *Story of Joseph*, arrived in Florence on May 15, 1548, and remained there at least until October 17, 1551 (his departure probably provides an indication that the designs and cartoons had all been completed by this date). Payments for the studies of the borders are documented as of 1549 and after, and are made out to Allori and Zucchetti.<sup>12</sup> Thus the cartoon for the present tapestry may include contributions by the artists then working in Bronzino's studio. Here, the work of Raffaellino dal Colle was probably limited to details of some figures. Generally speaking, the plastic vigor of the bodies in the foreground, in perfect harmony with the setting and elaborate decorative details in the background, indicates Bronzino's direct involvement in the conception and execution of the design and cartoon.

No drawings related to this tapestry have thus far been found, although the monkey

portrayed on the step at the bottom left has been connected to one on a sheet at the British Museum in London, which Heikamp first identified as a study for the borders of the series and attributed to Bronzino.<sup>13</sup>

Like the other tapestries in the *Story of Joseph* set, this one displays a judicious rather than extravagant use of metallic threads. In this respect, the comments of Pier Francesco Riccio, in charge of the Florentine tapestry works, concerning the use of gold threads, are significant: "too much gold . . . does not last and quickly turns black," so it should only be added to "those parts that most seek it."<sup>14</sup> Riccio's words provide a rare glimpse of the sort of practical considerations and experience that underpinned high-quality tapestry production in all the leading centers of the day. As the surviving tapestries demonstrate, the *Story of Joseph* set achieves a remarkable balance between such formal and decorative considerations and the ambitious pictorial effects demanded by the cartoons. It marks the crowning achievement of the Florentine manufactories, providing a remarkable testament of the vision and ability of Bronzino and his collaborators and the skills and expertise of Nicolas Karcher, Jan Rost, and their weavers.

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1. The set of twenty tapestries of the *Story of Joseph*, all still extant, was kept intact and occasionally hung, even outdoors, for the festivities of San Giovanni but otherwise almost always remained in the wardrobe of the Palazzo Vecchio until 1865, when Florence was briefly the capital of the Kingdom of Italy and the set was broken up. Ten tapestries were given on consignment by the royal galleries to the city of Florence and hung in the Sala dei Duecento. The other ten went to the Palazzo Pitti as an endowment to the crown, and, when the capital was moved to Rome in 1871, they were transferred to the Palazzo del Quirinale, into whose collections they were incorporated on July 14, 1882, and where they are still on exhibit today.
2. Adelson's extensive studies on the early years of Florentine tapestry manufacture, published in various essays in the 1980s, culminated in her 1990 Ph.D. thesis.
3. Rigoni 1884, p. 86, doc. 6; Adelson 1990, pp. 385–86, no. 25.
4. Adelson 1990, pp. 385–86, no. 25; G. Smith 1982, p. 185.
5. G. Smith 1982, pp. 185, 188–92.
6. Meoni 2000, p. 236.
7. Cox-Rearick 1993, pp. 160, 291–92.
8. Adelson 1990, pp. 74, 505–6, 560, 579–81; Meoni 1998, pp. 138 no. 8, 472, 475, 477.
9. See note 3.
10. Adelson 1990, pp. 579–81, 659–60; Meoni 1998, pp. 138–39 no. 8, 478, 482.
11. Adelson 1990, pp. 385–86, no. 25; Meoni 1998, pp. 138–39, no. 8, both with bibliographies.
12. Geisenheimer 1909, pp. 142–43; Adelson 1990, pp. 169–70, 551–52, 562–65, 578, 581, 588, 591, 596–97, 611–14, 622–23, 643; Meoni 1998, pp. 474–79.
13. Heikamp 1968, p. 22, fig. 1.
14. "[T]roppo oro . . . che dura poco e in breve si fa nero"; Ricci, letter to Christiano Pagni in Pisa, December 8, 1545, transcribed in its entirety by Adelson 1990, pp. 517–18, doc. 40.

## 63.

### *The Lamentation*

Design and cartoon by Francesco Salviati, first half of 1546  
Woven in the workshop of Nicolas Karcher, Florence,  
before July 31, 1546

Wool, silk, and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread  
202 x 200 cm (6 ft. 7½ in. x 6 ft. 6¾ in.)

8–9 warps per cm

Depositi Arazzi, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence  
(Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze,  
Arazzi 1912–25, 773)

PROVENANCE: July 31, 1546, delivered to Cosimo

de' Medici's Guardaroba at the Palazzo Ducale (known as the Palazzo Vecchio from 1549) and may have been exhibited subsequently, on certain ceremonial occasions, in the chapel of Eleonora, and probably in the Cappella dei Priori; 1549–74, registered in the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Vecchio and occasionally hung; 1638, 1663, 1688, recorded in inventories of the Guardaroba of the Palazzo Pitti; 1689–1741, probably in the Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano, near Florence; 1882, exhibited in the Regia Galleria degli Arazzi; 1922, transferred to the Uffizi; 1987–93, in the

Depositi Arazzi of the Palazzo Pitti; 1993–97, underwent restoration at the Palazzo Vecchio; December 2000, returned to the Uffizi.

REFERENCES: Müntz 1878–85, pp. 63, 94; Rigoni 1884, pp. 59 no. 119, 75 doc. 3, 87 doc. 6; W. G. Thomson 1906, p. 252; Voss 1920, pp. 1, 248, 252; Giglioli 1922; Göbel 1928, p. 381; Battistini 1931, p. 40; Mallé 1953, p. 130; Amsterdam 1955, p. 159; Viale Ferrero 1961a, pp. 30–31; Cheney 1963, vol. 1, pp. 191–93, vol. 2, pp. 376, 649–50, docs. 22, 25; Viale Ferrero 1963, p. 28; Carroll 1971, pp. 15, 28; Smyth 1971, pp. 91–92;



Detail of cat. no. 63

Gaeta Bertelà 1979, pp. 1054–55; Gaeta Bertelà 1980, p. 139; Viale Ferrero 1982, p. 140; Adelson 1983, pp. 905, 908; Adelson 1985b, pp. 150, 160, 161; Adelson 1990, pp. 49, 51, 68, 70, 127, 131–37, 140, 142–45, 312–13, 329, 342, 355–57; Adelson and Landini 1990, pp. 59–62; Mortari 1992, pp. 36, 290, 291; Cox-Rearick 1993, pp. 10–11, 82–83, 155, 365, 376; Voss 1994, p. 170; Bacci and Innocenti 1996; Bacci and Innocenti 1997–98; Meoni 1998, pp. 42, 43, 44, 58, 148–51 (with bibliog.); Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, pp. 292–93; Caneva 2000, pp. 20–25; Innocenti and Bacci 2000a; Innocenti and Bacci 2000b; Innocenti et al. 2000.

CONDITION: Fair. The tapestry was restored in 1993–97 in Florence.

The *Lamentation* was woven by Nicolas Karcher before July 31, 1546, from a cartoon by Francesco Salviati as a trial sample for artist and weaver by the Medici court. It was probably intended for the altar of the Cappella dei Priori in the Palazzo della Signoria, even though for the first few years it may have been hung in Eleonora's private chapel in the same palazzo.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to a composition he had already employed twice before, Salviati adapted it to the demands of tapestry by heightening the chromatic tones and replacing the background

figures with an arid, rocky landscape leading to Golgotha.<sup>2</sup> The elaborate costumes and variety of textures allow for a virtuoso demonstration of the art of weaving in this first tapestry woven for Cosimo I de' Medici by Karcher's workshop.

This altar cloth expresses a sense of drama unmatched by any other Italian tapestry of the period. Yet the refined chromatic passages and sophisticated weaving techniques temper the emotional intensity, placing the representation squarely within the rarefied intellectual realm of *la Maniera*.





### Description and Iconography

All the inventories record the subject of this tapestry as a Pietà, a devotional theme usually represented by the Virgin meditating over the body of Christ, as described in the *Meditations* of Pseudo-Bonaventura and the *Revelations* of Saint Bridget of Sweden.<sup>3</sup> The presence of the Magdalen and Joseph of Arimathea (or perhaps the younger Nicodemus) has more recently prompted suggestions that the work depicts the Lamentation, even though the manner in which Joseph or Nicodemus is supporting the body seems more in keeping with the Deposition, as recounted in the Gospels.<sup>4</sup> One of the two Salviati paintings with the same composition was made for the church of Corpus Domini in Venice and is today in Viggiù, while the other (probably also for Cosimo) is now in the Galleria Palatina of the Palazzo Pitti.<sup>5</sup> Aside from the image reversal resulting from production on a low-warp loom, one notable difference is that the instruments and other symbols of the Passion—along with the Medici-Toledo arms and Capricorn, Cosimo's ascendant sign—appear in the inner border rather than in the scene itself. The festoons of fruit and ribbons in the outer border recall those commonly represented in the borders of Netherlandish tapestries during the first third of the sixteenth century, while the geometrical decoration seems to derive from the so-called chessboard motifs typical of rugs from the eastern Mediterranean or perhaps from Egypt, which made their appearance in Florence about 1545.<sup>6</sup> The square format, derived from that of fifteenth-century altarpieces, is typical of the small devotional tapestries common in sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>7</sup>

### Patron

Karcher delivered the *Lamentation* to the wardrobe of the Palazzo della Signoria on July 31, 1546. The sixteenth-century inventories mention its destination as the "chapel" of the palazzo, which clearly must be the Cappella dei Priori, the principal chapel. The tapestry was probably used on special occasions to replace or cover an altar

painting. In the first years after it was made, it may have been hung in Eleonora's private chapel in the same palazzo, to replace Bronzino's *Deposition of Christ* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon), which had been given to Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, a minister of Charles V.<sup>8</sup>

The *Lamentation* was the first cartoon that Salviati painted for the newly instituted Florentine tapestry workshop of Cosimo I, as well as the first figurative tapestry woven by Karcher for the Medici court, for which he had already executed a bedcover.<sup>9</sup> Considered a trial sample for artist and weaver, it was eagerly awaited by Pier Francesco Riccio, the duke's majordomo and the person in charge of the tapestry works. By appraising it in light of works already completed by Rost, Riccio could establish how much future weavings by the two workshops would cost and thus determine the contract terms for the two Netherlandish masters. The postponement of the agreements with Rost and Karcher, which were not finalized until October 20, 1546, indeed seems due to the lateness of the delivery of the *Lamentation*.<sup>10</sup>

### Cartoonist and Workshop

Described on July 15, 1549, as one of the tapestries woven by Karcher from a "drawing" by Francesco de' Rosso, known as il Salviati (1510–1563), the work was dated to about that year by Rigoni.<sup>11</sup> Smyth suggested to Cheney that it might be identified with the *Pietà* delivered by the same weaver on July 31, 1546. Recognizing the painter's style in the tapestry, Cheney accepted this hypothesis and confirmed it with the publication of a document dated October 15, 1545, in which Salviati is mentioned among the first painters to be working on cartoons for the fledgling Florentine workshop.<sup>12</sup>

The composition is the same as that used by the artist in two paintings already mentioned. For these, and likewise for the tapestry, the model may have been a drawing in the Uffizi of the figure of Christ (Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, 1210 E).<sup>13</sup>

Of the tapestry designs made for Cosimo I, Salviati's contribution was limited to one piece

for the *Story of Joseph* set, and several small devotional tapestries. He did more significant work as a cartoonist for other patrons, especially the Salviati family (hence the derivation of his surname), for whom he tackled such themes as Dante's Meeting with Virgil, from the *Divine Comedy*, and the Seasons and the Ages of the World. That his drawings and designs even inspired Bronzino may be seen in the portiere *Justice Liberating Innocence* (cat. no. 61).<sup>14</sup>

In its materials and techniques, the *Lamentation* is perhaps the most sumptuous tapestry produced by the workshops of Rost and Karcher during their first eight years. All these works were realized with a high percentage of precious yarns—silk and silver- and gilt-metal-wrapped thread—and with refined weaving techniques that create striking effects of light and relief. All are in fact recorded in 1553 as being in the "secret Wardrobe," where Cosimo kept the most prized pieces of his collection; in the sixteenth-century inventories they are almost always in the depository. Their use only for special occasions and the great care given to them also seem dictated by the fragility of their materials.<sup>15</sup>

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1. Adelson 1990, pp. 132–33; Meoni 1998, pp. 44, 148, no. 15; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, p. 292.
2. Adelson 1990, pp. 134–35, 356; Meoni 1998, p. 148; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, p. 292; see also the discussion of Florentine tapestry workshop production above, pp. 496–97.
3. Meoni 1998, p. 148.
4. Adelson 1990, pp. 356–57; Matthew 27:57–58; Mark 15:42–46; Luke 23:50–54; John 19:38–40; cf. Meoni 1998, p. 148.
5. See note 2.
6. Adelson 1990, pp. 140–41, 356; Adelson and Landini 1990, pp. 59–62.
7. Göbel 1923, p. 412; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, pp. 292, 294.
8. Adelson 1990, pp. 132–33; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, p. 292.
9. Adelson 1990, pp. 51–52, 356.
10. Ibid.; Meoni 1998, pp. 44, 148.
11. Rigoni 1884, p. 59, no. 119.
12. Cheney 1963, vol. 1, pp. 191–93, vol. 2, pp. 376, 649–50, docs. 22, 25; Smyth 1971, pp. 91–92.
13. Carroll 1971, pp. 15, 28, fig. 9.
14. Monbeig-Goguel 1976; Adelson in Rome and Paris 1998, p. 292.
15. Meoni 1998, p. 44.











## Epilogue: The Netherlandish Tapestry Industry after 1560

The scale of the Netherlandish tapestry industry by the early 1560s has never been surpassed. At its center lay Brussels, which, through its dominance of high-quality production from the beginning of the sixteenth century, had attracted an unprecedented volume of lucrative commissions, ensuring a steady financial flow into the hands of the leading merchants and manufactory owners, which in turn encouraged and facilitated ever more ambitious projects and the participation of cartoonists and weavers who were more and more experienced and specialized in their skills. Writing a description of the Netherlands in 1567, the Florentine ambassador Ludovico Guicciardini stated that the Brussels tapestry trade was the most profitable metier of the town and that Brussels tapestries made from silk, silver, and gold were universally admired.<sup>1</sup>

If Brussels dominated high-quality production for more than six decades, Antwerp exercised a similar command over trade and dispersal. Described as the most opulent city in Europe under Charles V, Antwerp had a population in excess of 125,000 inhabitants at its apogee in 1560, with more than 1,000 resident foreign merchants. The volume of trade it handled was staggering. Guicciardini claimed that on occasion as many as 500 ships entered the port in a day, and that about 2,000 carts entered the city each week. Contemporary documentation confirms the enormous volume of staple and luxury products that did, indeed, flow through Antwerp, including a major portion of the tapestries woven in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> There were tensions between those involved in the tapestry trade in Brussels and in Antwerp, with the Antwerp authorities encouraging artists, cartoonists, and weavers to resettle in Antwerp from the 1540s, and the Brussels guild of weavers vehemently objecting to the way in which the Antwerp authorities delayed promulgating the 1544 imperial regulations regarding the tapestry trade. However, it is evident that the links between the tapestry communities in the two towns were extremely close: the Antwerp Pand acted as a focus for the supply of raw materials and cartoons and the negotiation of sales and commissions; the Brussels workshops provided the bulk of the high-quality goods traded there.

The social and economic circumstances on which the high-quality tapestry industry depended were devastated by the religious strife and military combat that roiled during the 1560s, 1570s, and 1580s. Persecution of reformers had cast its shadow over the tapestry industry as early as the late 1520s when Bernaert van Orley and various leading Brussels merchants and weavers were fined for attending sermons preached by the Lutheran Claes van der Elst. The punishments imposed on that occasion were commuted or reduced, and for the most part, van Orley and his colleagues continued their trades relatively unaffected by these events. Nonetheless, continuing persecution of reformers resulted in a steady stream of weavers migrating to foreign countries during the 1530s, 1540s, and 1550s. Jan Rost was persecuted for heresy in 1534, and this must have been a factor in his relocation to Italy in 1536. Other weaver-entrepreneurs set up workshops in the Germanic states, resulting in the belated development of a Renaissance pictorial tradition in Germanic tapestry production. The workshops established during the late 1540s and 1550s by Seger Bombeck in Torgau and Leipzig and by Peter Heyman in Stettin are especially noteworthy for both the quality and the Reformation iconography of their products.<sup>3</sup> During the second third of the century, however, the impact of persecution and migration on the high-quality tapestry industry was relatively slight. In part this was because many of the key weavers and merchants in Antwerp enjoyed a privileged position. Although the number of foreigners resident in Antwerp and the constant traffic passing through it made it an especially fertile ground for the Reformation movement, the dependency of the Habsburg regime on financing from the Antwerp merchant community ensured that religious persecution and the Inquisition were not enacted as rigorously there as in other centers. Indeed, after 1520 the city enjoyed certain privileges that shielded merchants from Protestant regions from persecution for their faith.<sup>4</sup> This tolerance must have been among the factors that encouraged large numbers of Brussels weavers to relocate to Antwerp during the second third of the century.<sup>5</sup>

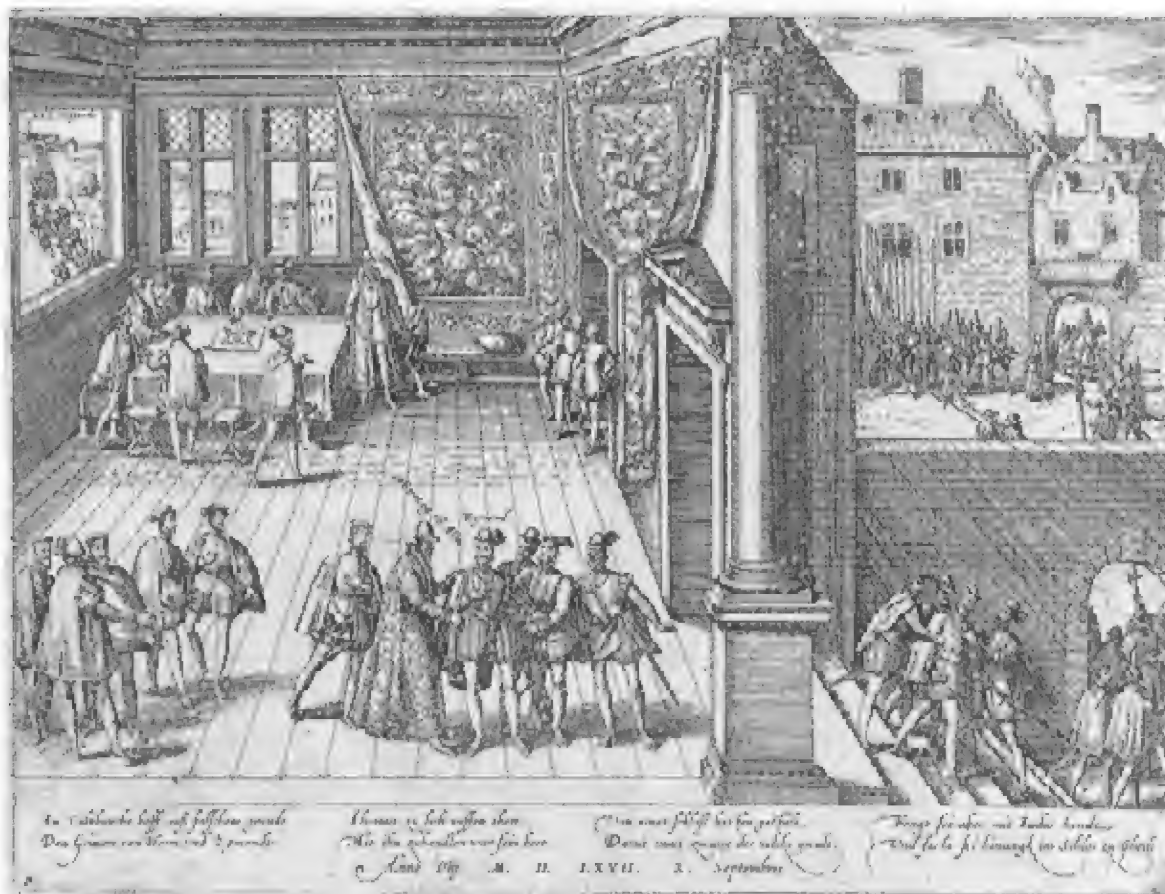


Fig. 227. Arrest of the Duke of Egmont from *Events in the History of the Netherlands, France, Germany, and England between 1535 and 1608*. Engraving by Frans Hogenberg. 20.7 x 27.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959 (59.570.200[77])

The situation changed following Philip II's accession to the throne in 1556. Philip's attempt to turn the Netherlands into a Spanish dependency governed by Spanish ministers during the early 1560s generated considerable discontent among the leading members of the council of state that were only briefly allayed when Cardinal Granvelle left the Netherlands in 1564. Philip's determination to enforce the decrees of the Council of Trent resulted in renewed opposition, culminating in the embassy of Lamoral, count of Egmont, to Spain in January 1565 to discuss the state of affairs. Philip received Egmont warmly, but the rigors of the Inquisition continued unabated in the Netherlands, resulting in widespread unrest during 1566 and 1567, the so-called Wonderyear, during which Antwerp became a Calvinist stronghold. In response to this situation, Philip dispatched Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, the duke of Alba, to the Netherlands in 1567 at the head of an army of ten thousand soldiers. Alba was granted unlimited powers to root out heretics, and on his arrival he established a tribunal, the Council of Troubles, to try those who had been involved in the disturbances. Egmont and Philip de Montmorency, count of Hoorn, popular leaders of the Protestants, were arrested in September 1567, imprisoned, and executed in June 1568. They were followed to their deaths by large numbers of their fellow citizens.

Obviously, these events had a devastating impact on the tapestry industry. Many weavers and tapestry merchants were sympathetic to the Reformation movement and had already chosen to emigrate before these grim developments. For example, in 1562, at the invitation of Frederick III, the elector of the Palatinate, more than fifty-eight weavers and their families relocated to Frankenthal, where they were housed in a former Augustinian abbey.<sup>6</sup> Other weavers traveled to Cologne, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and Württemberg, or into the northern provinces of the Netherlands.<sup>7</sup> Among the artisans who left Brussels in 1566 was Nicolaas van Orley, who, like his uncle Bernaert, was an important tapestry designer and cartoonist. Nicolaas van Orley subsequently worked in Stuttgart, Strasbourg, and Cologne before he settled with the community of Netherlandish weavers in Frankenthal sometime before 1574.<sup>8</sup> Those Protestants who had not fled before Alba's arrival were given considerable incentive thereafter. In Brussels, even leading figures with close links to the Spanish crown were not exempt from religious persecution. Despite his close relationship with both Granvelle and Alba, Willem de Pannemaker came under Alba's suspicion in 1568, but the accusation of heresy made against him was not proved and he appears to have successfully reingratiated himself with the duke.<sup>9</sup> Jan van Tieghem was not so successful. One of the leading Brussels



Fig. 228. *The Sack of Antwerp*, from *Events in the History of the Netherlands, France, Germany, and England between 1535 and 1608*. Engraving by Frans Hogenberg. 20.8 x 27.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959 (59.570.200[26])



merchant-entrepreneurs, whose mark appears on many of the finest products of the period including various sets purchased by Philip II, van Tieghem was expelled from the Netherlands by Alba's council in 1568. He subsequently established a workshop in Cologne, where he wove tapestries for Landgrafen Wilhelm von Hessen-Cassel, and by 1576 he was running a workshop in Wesel.<sup>10</sup> It seems likely that van Tieghem's fate was typical of that suffered by many less well-known weavers and merchants. For example, information regarding the Oudenaarde community reflects the large numbers of tapestry weavers who were active Protestants there, the torture and execution of some of the more prominent figures, and the large numbers who fled.<sup>11</sup>

The situation got even worse in the following twenty years. Alba's merciless actions encouraged the resistance and organization in the Northern Netherlands of anti-Catholic forces, who defeated the Spanish fleet and gained power in North Holland and Mons. Other towns declared their support for the rebels, and the States General, assembled in Dordrecht, declared themselves against Alba's government and rallied under the banner of William I, prince of Orange. Alba's army proceeded to reclaim the provinces, with the exception of Zeeland and Holland, but was repulsed in its attempts to take Alkmaar. Philip recalled Alba, enfeebled in health, to Spain in December 1573, but the vicissitudes of war were to continue.

In 1576 the poorly paid and mutinous Spanish troops launched a carefully planned attack on Antwerp. On November 4, five thousand soldiers from garrisons in Maastricht, Aalst, and Lierre descended on the town, which they proceeded to sack over the following week. Six thousand citizens were massacred, eight hundred houses burned, and indescribable deprivations and abuse inflicted on the citizens of the town. One group of troops made straight for the Tapestry Pand under the direction of Francisco de Ontoneda, a Spanish merchant from Bruges, who was well acquainted with the tapestry industry. Over the succeeding days, they looted hundreds of tapestries from the booths of the principal tapestry merchants, transporting them to the nearby residence of a certain widow Aranda, who was Ontoneda's mother-in-law. Adding insult to injury, the soldiers forced various tapestry workers to organize, pack, and in some cases, value, the tapestries. During the next month, the majority of these goods were carted and shipped out of Antwerp, traveling via Lierre and Maastricht to Paris and Spain, although some remained in the hands of the soldiers who had assisted in the looting.<sup>12</sup> Antwerp was regained by the prince of Orange in 1577, and in the following two years many of the merchants who had suffered at the hands of the Spanish troops sought to track down and reclaim the goods that had been stolen from them. The activity of the weaver-entrepreneur Francis

Spiering is particularly well documented in this respect. In pursuit of looted goods, he traveled to Maastricht and Paris.<sup>13</sup> Although he and some of his colleagues succeeded in reclaiming a portion of their goods, others were totally ruined.

Further impoverishment and misery was inflicted on many of the traditional Netherlandish weaving centers with the renewed military campaign led by Alessandro Farnese, duke of Parma (r. 1578–92), during the late 1570s and 1580s. Tournai, Bruges, and Ghent were all reoccupied by the Spanish forces. Oudenaarde fell in 1582 after a three-month siege, while Antwerp was taken in August 1585 after a long and bitter blockade, which brought the population close to starvation. According to Parma's peace terms, Protestant citizens were given two years in which to leave the city, a further blow to both the weavers and the merchants on whom the success of the Antwerp tapestry trade had depended.

The cumulative effect of these events on the tapestry industry was profound. The steady migration of merchants and weavers turned into a flood during the 1570s and early 1580s, with many going to towns such as Middelburg and Gouda in the northern provinces, and others following their compatriots to Protestant cities in Germany. Still others traveled to England, France, and even farther afield.<sup>14</sup> Quite apart from the drain on the pool of skilled labor available, the economic stability was disrupted as the dependable volume of demand, previously channeled through Antwerp, was now dispersed. Rich patrons from the Protestant countries turned instead to workshops in territories under Protestant rule. In response to this situation, Francis Spiering relocated his workshops from Antwerp to Delft by 1582, perhaps followed by a spell in Cologne. In 1593 he settled permanently in Delft where, with the encouragement and support of the town authorities, he established a sizable workshop in the former convent of Saint Agnes, which catered to the demands of many of the Protestant courts of northern Europe for the next thirty years.<sup>15</sup> Another leading weaver-entrepreneur, Joost I van Herselle, moved his workshop first from Brussels to Antwerp in 1580, and then about 1586 to Hamburg, where his son Joost II continued the enterprise well into the second decade of the seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup>

While tapestry weaving and trade unquestionably continued in Brussels and Antwerp throughout the 1560s and 1570s, and the 1580s, the overall impact of the social and economic disruption was that the combination of circumstances that had supported large-scale, high-quality production and trade for so long was irrevocably disrupted. The volume of highly financed commissions plummeted, many of the merchants who had provided funding were compromised financially, and many of the most

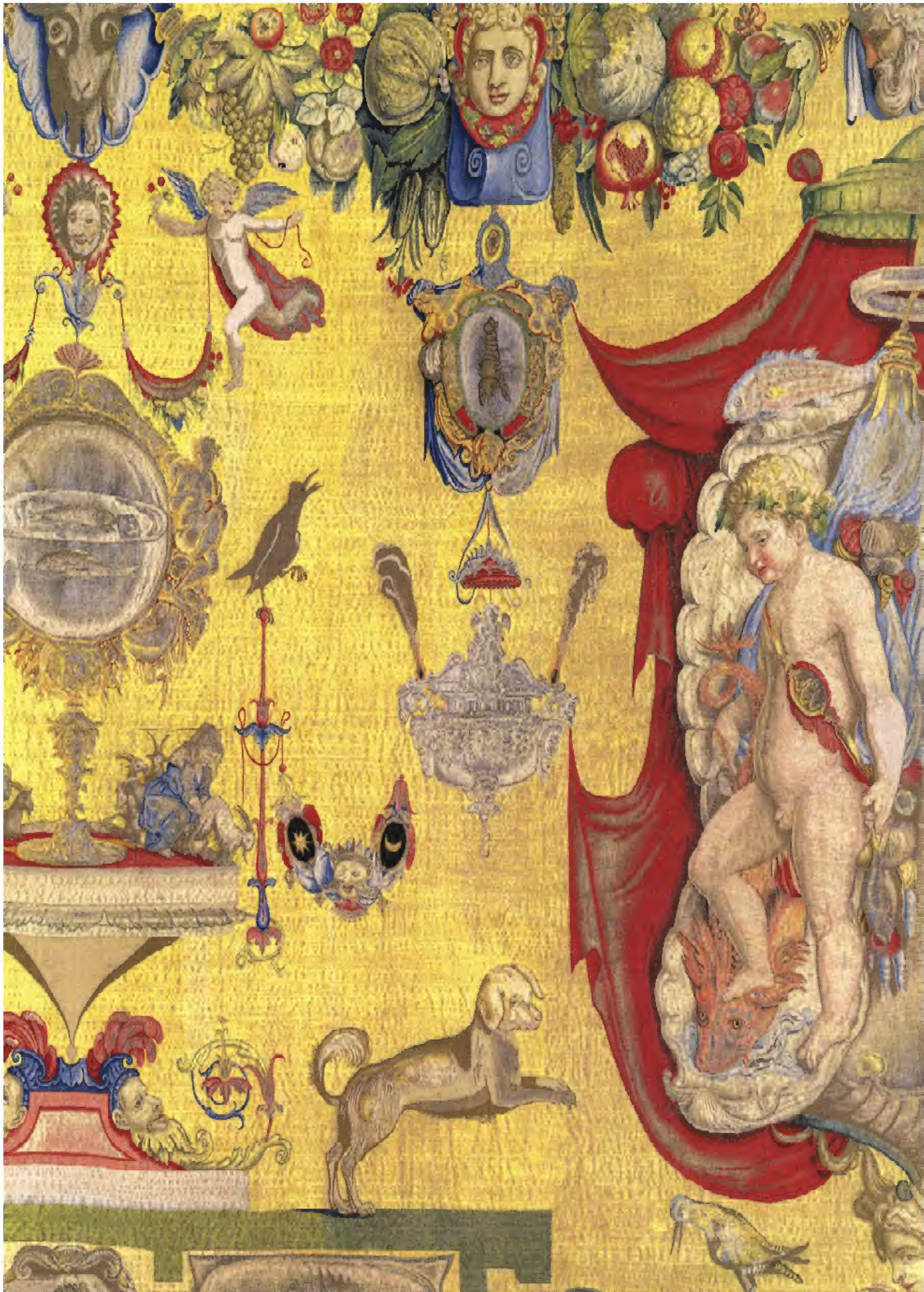
skillful artists, cartoonists, and weavers emigrated. A significant volume of tapestries continued to be produced in the traditional Netherlandish centers during the last third of the century, but this production is characterized by tapestries woven from simplified versions of older cartoons, in coarser materials, by less skillful weavers. In particular, the well-modeled large, muscular figures and beautifully delineated physiognomies of the greatest sixteenth-century Brussels tapestries, which required a level of artistic and technical skill and material quality (and thus funding) that no longer existed, became a thing of the past. Meeting the need and making virtue of necessity, many of the best tapestry cartoons of the last third of the sixteenth century featured small figures in elaborate but somewhat simplified gardens and landscapes, with whimsical architectural features drawn from contemporary prints.<sup>17</sup> Conceived in terms of line and decorative colors rather than illusionistic verisimilitude, these designs did not require the exacting and expensive re-creation of realistic full-scale figures or tonal atmospheric effects that had characterized high-quality Brussels production during the first two-thirds of the century. This decorative formula, which lent itself to the complex narratives of contemporary literature, was to enjoy great success during the following two decades. Some of the finest examples of this genre were the mythological and romance subjects designed for the Spiering manufactory by Karel van Mander the younger (1579–1623) during the 1590s.<sup>18</sup>

During the 1610s and 1620s, the high-quality tapestry industry in the Netherlands was revived as the result of legal and financial incentives that the archdukes Albert and Isabella gave to the Brussels tapestry industry, and the success of new large-figure tapestry cartoons by Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, and their contemporaries.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the grip that the Netherlandish industry held over high-quality production during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been loosened, and the character of European tapestry production was to change irrevocably during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as new centers of commercial production, many staffed by Netherlandish weavers, now developed in England, France, Italy, Germany, and elsewhere—in some cases aided by the benevolent patronage of rulers like Henry IV, king of France, and James I, king of England, who saw the establishment of native tapestry industries as a means of developing their local economies.<sup>20</sup> While the Brussels industry would again attain great success from the mid-seventeenth century through the 1730s, it was never to achieve the heights of quality and volume that had characterized independent commercial production in the first half of the sixteenth century, when tapestry was, truly, the art form of kings.



1. Guicciardini 1567, p. 58.
2. Schneebalg-Perelman 1981; Ewing 1990; Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 96–100.
3. Göbel 1933–34, vol. 2, pp. 43–56, 137–38; Heinz 1963, pp. 295–301, 304; Bauer 2002.
4. Marnef 1996, pp. 14–22 (with bibliog.).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–72.
6. Göbel 1933–34, vol. 2, pp. 8–15; E. Duverger 1995.
7. For details, see Göbel 1933–34, *passim*; Heinz 1963, pp. 286–307; and the essays in Delmarcel 2002.
8. Göbel 1933–34, vol. 2, pp. 8, 11, 12; E. Duverger 1995, pp. 87–88; Bauer 2002.
9. Steppe 1981a, p. 131.
10. Göbel 1923, p. 327; Schneebalg-Perelman 1972, pp. 428–34.
11. Göbel 1923, p. 469–70; Vanwelden in Oudenaarde 1999, pp. 59–66.
12. Donnet 1894.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 449, 454, 459–62.
14. Much information regarding emigration of Netherlandish weavers during the 1560s and 1570s will appear in Delmarcel 2002.
15. Göbel 1923, pp. 539–43; E. Hartkamp-Jonxis in Amsterdam 1993, pp. 316–17, 420–23 (with bibliog.); E. Hartkamp-Jonxis in New York and London 2001, pp. 512–19.
16. Göbel 1933–34, vol. 2, pp. 113–17.
17. For examples, see Göbel 1923, fig. 152; E. Duverger 1969; and Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 172–74.
18. E. Hartkamp-Jonxis in New York and London 2001, pp. 514–19.
19. Delmarcel 1999a, pp. 209–50.
20. For an overview of the development of the European tapestry industry in the seventeenth century, see Lefébure in Joubert, Lefébure, and Bertrand 1995, pp. 138–205, and Heinz 1995, pp. 11–199. For more detail, see Göbel's comprehensive survey of European tapestry production, published in three parts each of two volumes; Göbel 1923, 1928, 1933–34. For discussion of the role that Netherlandish weavers played in the development of tapestry industries in other European countries, see the studies forthcoming in Delmarcel 2002.







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